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## WHO KILLED McNALLY?

A DETECTIVE STORY  
BY  
BEULAH - POYNTER



MYSTERY MAGAZINE



THE

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"THE CLUE OF THE WHORL," by Katherine Stagg, will appear in No. 83

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## WHO KILLED McNALLY?

### A DETECTIVE STORY

By BEULAH POYNTER

#### CHAPTER I.

"GOOD-NIGHT, chief, hope you get a good rest and feel better in the morning." Young Steele, Inspector Donovan's assistant, paused in the door-way as he spoke, a look of sympathy on his good-looking face as he noted the scowl on his superior's forehead and the swelling of the latter's jaw, which only needed Donovan's growl as he placed his hand upon the swollen member to indicate an aching tooth was upsetting the latter's equanimity.

"If this blame thing doesn't knock the stuffings out of my system, I'll hit the hay early," was the inspector's response.

Steele laughed. "A toothache is no joke, I know. You'd better see a dentist, sir."

"Dentist! Hell! I'm not going to have one sticking his finger down my throat and making bad matters worse. I guess my mother will fix me up all right when I get home. She has a remedy for every ailment under the shining sun. And speaking of sun, I wonder if it's ever going to shine again." He rose as he spoke, shaking his portly figure as a dog would have done, stretching his great arms over his head in a yawn; then he sauntered over to the window and stared down at the slippery pavement below.

It had been steadily pouring all day long, and now at seven o'clock the sidewalks shone like polished mirrors in the flickering light of the street lamps. Little gutters of water ran along the curbing, and necessitated a generous display of trim ankles and stockings as a girl stepped

from the walk on her way to a waiting street car. Donovan caught a glimpse of hair flame-colored and a long seal scarf, which in her effort to keep her umbrella up against the blinding wind and rain, and board the car at the same time, had become loosened and dropped to the pavement at her feet. He fancied he could hear her exclamation of dismay as she stooped quickly and picked it up, inspecting the mud stains on the Georgette lining and the drenched condition of the fur. The next moment she had disappeared in the midst of the home-going throng.

The inspector had seen her several times before from the window of his office, the brightness of her hair and a certain buoyance in her walk distinguishing her from the rest of her fellow workers, then also she was better dressed than most of the girls who were employed in that neighborhood. In a vague sort of way, Donovan wondered who she was, if she were pretty at close range, and whether she were shop girl or stenographer. Women did not interest him enough, however, for him to conjecture long, and except for an occasional glimpse of her the girl would have passed out of his mind altogether.

Like moving toadstools, the scurrying throng moved along under open umbrellas, and the chug-chug of overworked taxicabs pierced the damp air. Donovan shivered.

"Nasty night," he said, turning back toward his assistant, but already that young man was gone. Donovan heard the clatter of the elevator outside in the hallway. Leaving the window he slowly drew on his rain-coat, shivering a little as he anticipated the chill of the air which would cause the nerve in his aching tooth to jump. At the door he was arrested by the telephone on his desk ringing viciously three times. With something very like a snarl he snatched the receiver off the hook.

"Hello! Hello! Hello! Yes, yes, this is Donovan. Who are you? What? Oh, yes, Patrolman McGaffey; well, what is it?"

"It's murder, chief," came in an excited voice over the wire. "1962 Riverside. Can you come?"

Donovan swore softly under his breath, at the same time reaching in his vest pocket for a pencil and notebook. "Does it look like a mystery case?"

"Mighty peculiar," was the reply. "They've found the body of a man in a dumb-waiter—I'm stumped."

"In a dumb-waiter! How's that possible?"

"Search me! He's there all right. I'm looking at him now, that's all I know!"

"I'll be right up. What's that number again?"

"1962 Riverside. Fifth floor, apartment K. McNally is the name."

"All right. Don't let them touch anything. Who's with you?"

"Patrolman Burke, and a bunch of tenants. I've telephoned Dr. Mabley."

"Atta boy. Don't let anyone leave until I get there." He jotted down the number of the street

and the name in the notebook after he hung up the receiver, and thrust a cigar in his mouth which he did not light. Whenever impressed with anything or disturbed in any way Larry Donovan always produced a huge black cigar from some place about his person and without ever lighting it, managed by much vigorous chewing to demolish it.

No taxi being in sight when he reached the street he dodged into a nearby subway entrance and took a Broadway express headed uptown.

He had but half a block to walk to reach the address that the young policeman had given him, and just as he stepped into the ornate entrance of one of those many marble palaces which house small cities in themselves he came face to face with the red-haired girl who had momentarily intrigued him.

She had a struggle to lower her umbrella, and Donovan in a sheepish sort of way, being a trifle shy where girls were concerned, came to her assistance, though he forebore a second glance at her as they entered the elevator together.

The elevator boy, black, shiny and wall-eyed, was obviously aware of the tragedy that had taken place in the building, and very excited about it, but the presence of a stranger in the car kept him silent where otherwise he would have been loquacious.

Donovan was surprised when the girl got out at the same floor he did, and when he asked the black one where apartment K was she spoke up quickly:

"I live in apartment K. Who is it you wish to see?"

"I am Inspector Donovan," he answered. "I come from headquarters. Evidently you don't know anything about what has happened."

The girl's face paled, her grey eyes, wide and dark-lashed, grew dark with fright. She gave a little cry and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"What has occurred? I don't understand. What is it? You—you—are a police officer—is—is—anything wrong?"

"Something very wrong. Possibly murder!"

"Murder!" she swayed, and turned deathly white. "Who—who—is it?"

"My dear young lady, as I am just on my way there I'm afraid I don't know any more about it than you do."

"I hear hit was Mr. Gretchel," spoke up the elevator boy, the whites of his eyes rolling in excitement. He stood inside the car with the door open, his curiosity as to who the stranger could be overcoming his feeling of duty.

The girl looked dazed at his information.

"Gretchel? Gretchel? I don't know anybody by that name."

"He lives on de top floor," vouchsafed the negro. "He have dat studio, and paints pictures. Fore Gawd, it's awful if somebody done kill him."

The girl shook her head and turned to Donovan. "I'll show you the way," she said quietly.

## CHAPTER II.

DONOVAN marvelled at her self-control as she inserted a key in the lock and opened the door. At their entrance someone inside exclaimed in a feminine voice:

"Here's Mrs. McNally now."

The apartment into which they stepped was a doll-like box of a place, one of those innumerable two rooms, kitchenette and bath arrangements that the congested living conditions had brought about in New York, but it was unusually arranged inasmuch as the dumb-waiter opened into the small lobby or foyer hall, which was immediately off the main hallway entrance. Consequently the first sight that met the inspector's eyes was the stark body of the dead man hanging half out of the open door, apparently held in place by the fact that his head and shoulders acted as a wedge to keep the dumb-waiter stationary.

On beyond the foyer, in the living room, was huddled the throng of horror-stricken persons who had rushed upon the scene at the first outcry. Among them was the young patrolman, McGaffey, who had telephoned the inspector to come.

At the first glimpse of the dead man, Mrs. McNally recoiled, and gave a suppressed cry, but the next moment gained control of herself and passing through the velvet curtains which draped the doorway between the living room and the foyer hall, disgarbed her damp outdoor clothing and waited with Donovan to hear what had happened.

The inspector only glanced casually at the corpse, noting in that brief survey that the man was unquestionably dead and had been so some little time, then he stepped up to McGaffey.

"Know who he is?"

McGaffey shook his head. "There seems to be some doubt as to that," the younger man replied. "The superintendent says he looks a lot like a chap who lives on the top floor. Harmon Gretchel, his name is; but the telephone operator says positively this Gretchel left town this morning, and he hasn't been in his apartment all day, as she rang his phone again and again and got no answer."

Donovan looked at the various persons assembled in the little room. There was a very light-colored girl, with her hair tied in numerous pig-tails and knotted close to her head, who sat huddled near the window in a shadow, evidently pitifully terrified. Not far from her, the mistress of the apartment, Mrs. McNally, was standing under a stand lamp whose amber glow threw an aureole of golden light upon her flame-colored hair and the soft autumn shade of the Charmouse gown she wore.

Grim, sour-visaged and gray-faced, the superintendent of the building leaned against the wall, his grimy overalls an incongruous discord in contrast to the daintiness of the ivory satin wall paper and the orchid silk hangings. He was a

huge bulk of a man, his round bullet-shaped head, prominent chin, and heavy mouth proclaiming his Teutonic birth.

Near him, sitting tense with white-knuckled hands grasping her silken clad knees, was another woman, older by some few years than Mrs. McNally, but a marvel of voluptuousness from the crown of her tawny marcelled hair to the tip of her satin slipper. She was clad in an evening gown of silver lace, with little as to waist and much as to train. Her beautifully moulded arms and bosom emerged firm and white from a billow of filmy tulle, and she sat so motionless she gave one the impression of a block of marble carved and tinted into the replica of a beautiful woman. In contrast to her yellow hair and white skin was the color of her eyes, a velvety pansy black, with a world of tragedy behind them.

Silently Donovan studied her, wondering at her unwavering gaze. It was as though she were unconscious that there was any one else in the room with her, as though no one but herself existed. He turned slowly and looked across the room at the red-haired girl, surprising a curious expression on her face. Like himself, she was staring at the blond woman instead of the dead man, but her short upper lip was drawn back from her small white teeth with utter loathing, and her eyes were filled with absolute disgust. In all his years of experience never had the officer seen the same look on a woman's face before, nor been conscious of such hatred as seemed to emanate from this flame girl.

For the moment he lost his interest in the dead man. Curiosity as to the reason for the enmity existing between these two women of such obvious culture overcome all other feeling. He shook aside this sensation, however, and stared at the fifth person in the room, a pert little black-haired girl, whose piquant features and twinkling eyes proclaimed the fact that although intensely excited by what had occurred, and tremendously interested in the sordid drama, it was as an on-looker, one of an audience, not as an actor in the tragedy.

"Who discovered the body?" Donovan asked tersely.

"The maid," replied McGaffey.

"The black girl?"

"Yes."

Donovan turned and made a gesture to her. "Come here."

The maid raised her eyes; she seemed to shake all over and cover into the armchair in which she was sitting, but she did not move.

"Here, you. Didn't you hear what I said? Come here." Donovan repeated the command.

"Yuh—yuh—mean me?" she stammered.

"Yes."

Mrs. McNally gave her a little push, and the girl shambled toward him, her flat feet wabbling in a pair of ridiculously high-heeled shoes.

"Yas, sah?"

"You discovered the body?"

"Yas, sah, I did. I found the dead man, but I didn't kill him. Ah didn't kill him."

"Nobody's accusing you. Stay here, I want to talk to you. I want you to tell me what you know, and I want you to tell it straight. - Get me?"

"Yah, sah. But Ah don't know nothin'. Ah— Yuh ain't goin' tuh arrest me, is yuh, cause Ah—"

Donovan interrupted her shrill wail and, whirling about quickly, went into the tiny foyer, followed by the young patrolman.

"Pull the curtains," he said to McGaffy. "I want a good look at the dead man before I go any further." He stepped close to the dumb-waiter. "When did you 'phone Mabley? It strikes me he ought to be here by now."

"I telephoned him before I did you. I guess he waited to finish his dinner before coming," said McGaffy. "He lives in the neighborhood. Doctors are cold-blooded devils I'm thinkin', and nothin' will affect his appetite."

"What makes you think it's murder and not suicide?" the inspector asked abruptly, changing the subject.

"Good Lord, chief! It couldn't be anything else. There's not a chance in a million of it's bein' suicide. A live man couldn't huddle himself up in a ball like that, and then die for no reason whatsoever, could he? There's no weapon in his hands, but there's blood all over him."

Donovan grunted. He stepped up to the body and surveyed it critically.

"Wounded in the back," he muttered. "A knife thrust, and a nasty one."

The dead man lay with almost the entire upper portion of his body extending out through the open door. Evidently a part of the car had been removed and the body had been crammed into it, the back against the wall, the face turned toward the door. Probably the car had descended rapidly, but the door of apartment K evidently being open had allowed space for the cramped body to fall forward, and thus had stopped the car's progress.

A soft gray fedora hat was crushed far down over the dead man's forehead so that little of his face was visible except a portion of a mottled gray beard. He wore a gray mixed cloth top coat, of good cut and material, but it was now splattered and discolored with blood. And as Donovan said, there was no question but that he had been killed by a knife thrust.

Upon his hands were brown doe-skin gloves, such as a man who drives an automobile wears. The blood had trickled down upon them also, and they were sticky and black.

"Lend a hand," said Donovan grimly. "Dr. Mabley ought to be here in a few minutes. We'll lay him in there on the couch."

As they started to lift the body the door-bell jangled unpleasantly. Its ringing was greeted with a shriek from the telephone girl, but as no one showed any inclination to open the door Dono-

van did so. He admitted a pompous, red-faced individual in a soaking raincoat and spectacles, whom he greeted as Dr. Mabley, his medical assistant. With the physician was another patrolman, Burke.

### CHAPTER THREE

"**N**ASTY night!" said the doctor in a high-pitched treble, almost ludicrous in one of his stature and weight.

"And a nasty crime," from Donovan. "You took your time in getting here. The body was found just as you see it. Looks like a thrust in the back and an instantaneous death. We are going to put him in there so that you can get a good look at him."

For reply Dr. Mabley pushed aside the velvet hangings and stepped into the sitting-room.

"Where's the bath? I want to dispose of these wet togs before I go any farther."

When he re-entered the room, minus coat and umbrella, Donovan and the two patrolmen had placed the dead man on a wide divan standing between two windows that overlooked the Hudson. As they laid the body on a quilt which the maid had fetched from the bedroom, the blond woman started forward, her eyes widening, her lower lip drawn inward. She gave a shuddering sob, then flung up her hands, covering her face.

"That's not Harmon!" she cried. "Oh, thank God! Thank God!"

The red-haired girl moved away from her position under the lamp and stepped closer to her, her delicate nostrils quivered and she breathed heavily. "If he isn't Harmon Gretchel, who is he?" she asked coldly.

"I—how should I know? This is your apartment, not mine. You should know who comes here and who doesn't," was the icy response.

"He looks like Mr. Gretchel—and yet I think maybe he iss not," muttered the superintendent.

The two women stared at each other for a moment; then Mrs. McNally shrugged her shoulders and said softly, with a pathetic catch in her voice:

"I don't know Mr. Gretchel; I never saw him to my knowledge, nor have I ever seen this man. This is my apartment, but I am as unable to understand that man's being here as you are. It's all so terrible and—and—oh, I wish Harry were at home."

"That's her husband," whispered the telephone girl to Donovan. "He's a lawyer, and has an office downtown."

Until that moment Donovan had fancied the girl a widow. There was an air of aloneness about her, a certain pathetic independence that had made him fancy she had nobody but herself to think about, then also the fact that she was employed downtown had led him to think so. Evidently, though her husband might have his office

in that section of the city, they did not work together, as he was not at home and she had come alone. He was conscious of being disappointed that she was not free, and the feeling irritated him. He had no time for sentiment, nor need of women in his life. All his creature wants were taken care of by the little mother who adored every inch of his six feet three of brawny sinew and muscle. Then, although he would never admit it, Larry Donovan was diffident around women, almost bashful. He felt huge and awkward in the presence of a girl unless in his professional capacity, and at those times he was brusque, almost rude in his manner, certainly doing nothing to encourage any tender feeling in their hearts.

He waved them aside to allow the physician to examine the body. With a practiced hand Dr. Mabley gave the man a turn, and as he did so the gray fedora fell to the floor, disclosing to view a youthful face topped by a thatch of yellow-brown hair.

There was a gasp from the spectators, then the doctor said grimly:

"That beard is false." He gave it a jerk, and the clump of gray hair came away in his fist. Mrs. McNally cried, she swayed and sank unconscious before the divan.

"Gott!" exclaimed the superintendent, "dot's her husband, McNally. For why iss it he is dead?"

The blond woman drew a strange sucking breath and leaned closer, her face becoming whiter and whiter. Heedless of the damage done the costly lace of her gown, she trampled the train of it under her feet.

"Harry McNally," she said, aloud, as though speaking to ears that could hear. "Why are you dead? Who—who killed you—why—why—?"

#### CHAPTER FOUR

DONOVAN flicked back the gray top-coat, noting the maker's name on the label and the initials H. G.; then he lifted the fallen hat. There was a card inserted within the leather lining, and upon it was engraved "Harmon Gretchel."

As the wife lying crumpled on the floor showed no indications of reviving, he bade the maid look after her, though he felt strangely tempted to kneel upon the floor and administer to that white still figure himself.

The blond woman still seemed oblivious to all except the dead man.

"What's your name?" Donovan asked her abruptly. When she did not reply he touched her shoulder gently. She raised her midnight eyes to his in question. "What's your name?"

"Marya Hayden," she answered, with a slight foreign accent that he could not quite place.

"You live in this building?"

"Yes, just across the hall."

"Know this man?"

"Yes, I know him."

"Well?"

She hesitated. "Yes—very well—very well indeed."

"How do you mean well indeed?"

"We—we were lovers once, before—before he married her," indicating the unconscious woman.

Donovan remembered the look he had seen on Mrs. McNally's face and asked:

"After?"

She shook her head wearily.

"No. She thinks so, but it isn't true. I—I am engaged to some one else—I—Harry was a nice boy—but I didn't care for him—" She interrupted herself abruptly, her thin lips closing in a rigid line as though to lock a secret she was on the verge of divulging.

The colored maid who had been bending solicitously over her mistress, evidently glad that something had happened to draw the attention away from herself, straightened up with flashing eyes.

"Dat ain't so," she cried, "you-all ain't never left Mr. McNally alone and yo' knows it, and yo' beau knows it, 'cause his Sally what work foh him is my bestest friend and she say tuh me only yisterday dat sho as yo' is what yo' is, ef yo' don' quit triflin' with Mr. McNally yo' beau is goin' tuh do somethin' desperate—!"

"Keep still!" cried Marya Hayden. "You've something more to do than repeat malicious gossip!" Her whole attitude showed she feared what the colored girl would say, but the maid merely muttered, "Hit's true," and turned away.

Mrs. McNally moaned, opened her eyes and tried to rise. There was something pitiful about her weakness, and her desire to appear strong.

"Don't exert yourself," Donovan said quickly. "You've had a terrible shock."

"Yes." Her blue white lips scarcely formed the words. "The finding of the body here—unnerved me—but—my—husband—I—I'm awfully weak."

Somehow Donovan fancied that although she had suffered a terrible shock she felt no grief. She was shaken and horrified as is any one when death, sudden and unnatural, is brought close to home, but it did not seem to be because the victim was her husband. He wondered if she had not loved the dead man and if what the gossipy maid had said were really true and that the man was the beautiful blond's lover.

"Go into your bedroom," he said kindly. "I shan't need you for a while. I'll call you when I do."

She thanked him with a wan smile. Slowly, as though it were an effort to move, she gathered the folds of her gown about her and passed out of the room into the little one just through the double doors.

"Now," said Donovan, becoming brusque again, "we'll get down to cases and see what we can learn. We've wasted too much time as it is. Here

is a man recognized as Harry McNally, discovered murdered in his own apartment, his body stuffed in the dumb-waiter which has evidently dropped from above. He is disguised in clothes belonging to another tenant of the house, Harmon Gretchel. Apparently this lady—"looking at Maryia Hayden—"knew both men well. This Gretchel isn't by any chance the man you are engaged to?" he asked of her abruptly.

She nodded assent, a gray line settling about her lips.

"Hem!" He reached in his pocket and pulled out the inevitable cigar. "In that case, if what the maid says has any truth at all, we should lose no time in making Gretchel's acquaintance."

Maryia started to speak, evidently thought better of it and remained silent. It was obvious since the discovery that the dead man was Harry McNally, and not a stranger, she was intensely worried.

"What's the number of this Gretchel's apartment?" Donovan turned to the elevator girl, who had been following him about like a pet puppy. She brightened up, and fairly bristled with delight at being called upon to furnish some information.

"Nine K, the studio on the top floor. But he ain't there. He left town early this morning. I know, 'cause I was on the switchboard and a party wanted him something fierce about some awful important business, and when I told that party that he left early this mornin', 'cause I seen him goin' out with a suit case, he said, 'Don't yuh gimme any sass, young lady, yuh do as you're told and ring his 'phone,' and I says, 'He ain't there, he's gone to Philly,' 'cause he says tuh me that I should forward his mail tuh the Bellevue Stratford, but that party, he keeps a beefin' till I rings the 'phone and a-course there wasn't nobody in the apartment—"

Donovan interrupted her impatiently. "Is Mr. Gretchel out of town, Miss Hayden?"

Maryia smiled, a long, insinuating smile.

"The girl is right. He left early this morning."

"Call up apartment Nine K, Burke," he said to the patrolman. "There is a possibility that he may be there now."

Burke obeyed him, but repeated ringing brought no response. Claribel sniffed in a manner which said I told you so, but Maryia's expression never changed.

While Burke was at the telephone, Donovan closely examined the fedora hat and the coat upon the dead man, an inscrutable glint in his keen gray eyes. The leather lining of the hat was unsoiled, proving beyond a doubt that it had never been worn before. The gray top coat was quite new.

"What made you people think this chap was Gretchel?" he asked.

The superintendent spoke up.

"Mr. Gretchel always wears shust such a hat, shust such a coat; he has a beard shust like this man—and maybe they are the same size."

"I knew it wasn't Gretchel!" Maryia said hysterically; "I never thought he was—but—but the clothes are the same as Harmon always wears—and the beard—!"

"You tink maybe Mr. Gretchel kill him?" queried the superintendent almost eagerly.

Donovan did not answer him. He motioned to McGaffy and spoke to him in an undertone.

"Beat it to a telephone booth outside, and put in a long-distance call for Gretchel at the Bellevue Stratford, Philadelphia. We'll see if he went there. I don't know if he had anything to do with this, but if he didn't he'll know who it is that has it in for him enough to want to make this look like his work."

McGaffy nodded.

"If he isn't there, get hold of Tom Steele at once. Give a description of this chap and tell him we want Harmon Gretchel, and he's got to find him."

"Yes, sir."

"You might 'phone Steele anyway, and have him come up here."

Dr. Mabley, who all the time had been examining the dead man, now joined Donovan.

"Inspector," said he, with badly concealed excitement, "that poor devil was struck in the back with a knife; probably the blow hastened his death, but he was dying before he received the knife thrust. He was poisoned with strychnine."

"Well, I'm damned!" exclaimed Donovan.

## CHAPTER FIVE

TOM STEELE had just finished his dinner, donned his lounging robe and bedroom slippers, and with a pipe of fragrant tobacco had settled back in an armchair to read the evening paper when Donovan's message reached him. At his wife's questioning look he told her that he must go uptown at once, and with a smile of resignation for the long evening she must spend at home alone, she assisted him into his raincoat and watched him depart. So preoccupied with the description of the man McGaffy had given him over the telephone the young detective ran headlong into a man who was coming up the stairs from the subway station just as he was entering. The man made no outcry, but dodged quickly past him, as though fearful of being recognized, and his furtive manner made Steele give him a second glance. That look caused him to whirl around and follow the man, for he wore a gray fedora, discolored and wet, pulled well down over his face, so that little but a beard such as artists are prone to effect was seen.

As the stranger did not board a car but walked, Tom had no difficulty in following him. He walked rapidly up Broadway, dashing in and out of the theatre crowds on their way to places of amusement, and finally turned into a cross street in the middle forties, entering a side door of a

hotel frequented by actors and others of artistic professions.

Tom stood undecided what to do for a moment, then he entered the hotel also, just in time to see the other man going upward in the elevator. The detective walked over to the room clerk and inquired the name of the man in the gray fedora, but that worthy was a little uncertain, as he had just come on duty and the man had not inquired for his key.

There was a telephone booth off the lobby. Tom went into it, and called Donovan at the Riverside apartment.

"Say, chief," he said when he got the inspector, after being answered by a feminine voice, "I'm down on 46th street at the Madison Hotel. I was on my way up there when I saw a bird that looked like the description of this Gretchel you gave me. I can't intrude on him, for even if it is Gretchel you've nothing on him, but I don't want him to leave without my knowing it. Shall I stay here or will you send some one down to take my place?"

"I'll send Burke," was the reply. "There may be two men in the world who look alike, but it's well to keep your eyes open. We just got Gretchel on the 'phone in Philly; he's there all right, and is as surprised as we are. He's coming back on the midnight train. Beat it up here as soon as Burke gets there."

## CHAPTER SIX

AFTER Burke left to telephone Philadelphia, Donovan turned once more to the colored maid. "Let's hear what you know besides Mr. McNally's philandering. What's your name?"

"Leona Marrila Greene."

"Do you live here?"

"No, sah. Ah just comes in, but Ah sleeps out. Ah's married and mah husband wouldn't allow me tuh stay away at nights, 'sides they ain't no place foh me in Miss McNally's apartment. She sleeps in dah bedroom huhself, and Mr. McNally, he sleeps—er—er did sleep on dah divan out yere."

"When did you find the body?"

"Waal, hit's dis erway, Mr. Perliceman. I was out here peelin' some taters foh dinnah, knowin' Miss McNally would mos' likely be home early and Mr. McNally some time or 'tother, and I was expectin' some things from dah grocery and—"

"When did you find the body?"

"Mah Lawdy, ain't I tellin' uv yo'? I lef' dah dumb-waitah door open so's Ah could hear it ef anybody pulled at dah rope. Our bell didn't ring, an' I'd tole dat janitor time an' agin tuh fix it, dat hit was most perturbable havin' tuh listen for it all dah time; waal, the door was open, when all to once I heard hit come floppity-floppity down dah shaft, jes es ef hit 'ud come a long way, an' Ah run out to see ef hit was dah grocer man

a-pullin hit down, when, mah Gawdy a'mighty! jes as Ah got dar dat thing toppled out right in mah face. I screamed and screamed, and run out into dah hall, an' dah janitor come, an' Miss Hayden from across the way, an' Miss Claribel from downstairs. Den Miss Hayden she telephoned foh dah perlice, and you come and—Yo-all ain't accusin' me a-murderin' Mr. McNally, is yo'? Mah Gawd, Ah don' 'tend tuh love him, but Ah never could a-done nothin' like dat."

Donovan turned to Maryia.

"Did you hear this woman scream?"

"Yes."

"What made you come at her call? Did you know she was alone?"

"I supposed so. I knew Mrs. McNally was employed downtown and"—she hesitated—"I thought Mr. McNally was out of town, I—"

"Why did you think he was out of town?"

"Because—because I—met him in the hall yesterday and he said he was going to Boston—on business."

Donovan knew she was lying, but he allowed her to continue as though he believed her.

"Mr. McNally was in the habit of leaving town often?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"Well—well—I think he is. He used to make flying trips to various cities when we were sweethearts. I suppose he does the same now."

"Is Mr. Gretchel, your fiancé, aware of the fact that you and McNally were sweethearts at one time?"

"No, I think not. To my knowledge Mr. Gretchel has never heard of Harry McNally."

"When you all live in the same apartment house? Is that possible?"

"Quite. I lived here before the McNallys were married. I met Mr. Gretchel here quite by accident. But I don't see what my private affairs have to do with this. My fiancé is in Philadelphia and knows nothing about this terrible thing, if this is what you are getting at. I was simply dressing to go to the theatre, and when I heard the maid scream 'Murder,' I came in curiosity, the same as any one else would under the circumstances. I should very much like to go to my own apartment, if you please." She flung back her tawny head with an air of bravado that seemed assumed.

"Just a moment. Do you live alone, Miss—Miss Hayden?"

"I do. I am a model, an artist's model."

"You pose for Mr. Gretchel?"

"I did before I became engaged to him."

"Were you ever in this apartment before?"

Again she hesitated. Her eyes narrowed, and she glanced hastily beyond the double doors into the bedroom where Mrs. McNally lay stretched on a four-poster.

"Once," she answered as though compelled against her will to admit it.

"Mrs. McNally stopped me in the hall and asked me to come in; she wanted to ask me some questions about her husband. She was very jealous of him and me; she accused me of still carrying on an affair with him; she said he had married her to spite me, but that he still loved me and that after their marriage we had made up the quarrel which had separated us, and that we now continued to meet."

"Was what she said true?"

"I told you I was engaged to Harmon Gretchel!" The black eyes flashed fire.

"You are evading my question."

She smiled.

"You are very persistent, aren't you? Yes, a portion of what you say is true. Mr. McNally is—er—was still in love with me, I think, but I am not certain that he married his wife to pique me, but he did not succeed, for I had grown tired of him long before he met her, and only quarreled as an excuse to break off with him. He moved into this apartment because I lived here, and almost at once tried to win back my affections. I am truly in love with my fiancé, and avoided Mr. McNally every way possible. For what his wife said to me, he must have told her he did not love her, for nothing I did could have given her that impression. I was very sorry for her, for she was a nice little woman and deserved better treatment than she received. Now you know it all."

"Did the dead man know of your present engagement?"

"Yes, I told him."

"Did Mrs. McNally believe what you said?"

"I'm afraid not." She turned her face away to hide the quivering of her chin. "Please don't ask me any more questions. I—I feel very indelicate talking this way."

"Just one more. Who was here when you came in?"

"The maid and Claribel, the telephone girl; she arrived just a moment before I did. She had been in my apartment helping me dress and was leaving when she heard the scream."

"You telephoned for the police?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"That's the usual thing to do, isn't it?"

"And the superintendent, you sent for him also?"

"Yes."

"That will do, but please don't leave just yet."

Donovan turned to the man, but received very little information from him or from the girl Claribel. When Burke returned saying he had gotten in touch with Gretchel in Philadelphia, the inspector turned to McGaffy and said:

"Stay here. You come with me, Burke, and you also," to the superintendent. "Burke, see that no one leaves this room; if Steele arrives, get me, I'm going upstairs, and will be in one of the Ks. Don't let any one touch anything till I get back."

As he reached the door the telephone bell rang.

Claribel answered it and informed him he was wanted. It was Steele on the 'phone. Donovan informed him he would send Burke downtown to take his place at the Madison Hotel, and for him to hurry up there at once; then he dispatched the patrolman, bade McGaffy stay in 6K, and asking Dr. Mabley and the superintendent to come with him, he left the apartment.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

"WHO lives in the apartment over this?" asked Donovan when he stepped into the hallway.

"A widow and her daughter," answered the superintendent, "but they have gone South for the winter, and the apartment is closed up. They have money and never sublet it."

"Got the key?"

"Yes."

"And the apartment over it, who lives in it?"

"Two chorus girls—Miss Dorothy Day and Bettie Brown."

"And the next one?"

"Dot's the top floor, the studio; Mr. Harmon Gretchel, he lives in it."

"Oh, yes. Got a key for all of the apartments?"

"Yes. My pass-key unlocks them all."

"All right, we'll make a round of them; never mind the elevator, we'll walk, and there's no need of taking the coon into our confidence. Equal to a climb, Doc?"

Dr. Mabley groaned ludicrously, and mopped his florid face, but he trudged along after the inspector without a word. At 7 K the superintendent did not stop to ring the bell, but unlocking the door, ushered in Donovan and the medical examiner.

The apartment was an exact replica of the one they had left on the floor below, except for the furnishings. Everything was covered with striped denim, the blinds were drawn, and the rugs were rolled up and stood against the wall. On the dumb-waiter door which was closed was an extra bolt covered with dust and showing that it had not been opened for some time.

"Nothing doing here," said Donovan "We'll go upstairs."

They rang the bell at 8 K, and were answered by a feminine shriek; then the door was pushed open the merest trifle, and a tousled brown head appeared at the crack, while two very blue frightened eyes looked questioningly at them.

"What do you want?" asked the owner of the voice. "Oh, it's you, Mr. Muller," she added, seeing the superintendent. "What is it?"

"Dis gentleman iss a officer of dah law, Miss Day," replied Muller. "He wants a look at your dumbwaiter."

The girl gave a little squeal, but stepped aside and allowed them to enter. "It's a cop," she

called over her shoulder to the other occupant of the room, a girl in a vivid kimono and bobbed hair, who rose languidly from her place beside the window and sauntered over to them with the easy feline grace of a showgirl showing off a new model gown.

"Is it true, Mr. Muller, that somebody has been murdered in this house?" she drawled. The superintendent nodded gravely. It seemed to Donovan that the German was anxious to get out of the apartment, but the inspector stepped well into the room, casting a cursory glance at the dumbwaiter door, also locked and bolted. A smell of cooking and French perfume greeted his nostrils, and he saw the remains of a meal on a little gate-leg table near the kitchenette. The tall girl with the bobbed hair noticed the glance he gave toward the littered dining table, and with an apologetic smile snatched up the dishes and carried them to the sink.

Donovan turned to the other girl, and looked at her curiously. She was a pretty little thing with mouse-colored brown hair and a pale, pointed face; under her china-blue eyes were deep shadows that seemed to speak of tears or sleepless nights. She was intensely nervous, and seemed laboring under an effort to appear natural. The smile upon her face was forced and pathetic.

"Didn't you hear any cries?" Donovan asked her abruptly.

"Sure I heard cries, but I thought maybe somebody's cook had burnt herself, or a neighbor's cat was serenading its sweetheart, till the elevator boy said that Mr. Gretchel had been murdered. My Gawd! And him living just above us!" She looked apprehensively behind her at the window through which Donovan could see the fire escape that led to the floor above.

"Have you been home all the afternoon?" he asked.

"Sure. The show business is dead now, and we've neither of us got no more job than a rabbit!" Donovan sensed the tragedy in these words, and realized the reason for the shadowed eyes.

"Did you hear the elevator drop a short time ago?"

"I don't know. The fool thing is always going up and down at the wrong time. I've got so used to its creaking I never hear it any more."

"It always wakes me at an ungodly hour in the morning," drawled the other girl, apparently not at all disturbed by the fact that a murder had been committed or being without a position. "How's your daughter, Mr. Muller?" she asked as an afterthought. "Working?"

Muller's stolid face flushed, his eyes shifted. "Yah, she is working?" he answered.

"Where?" exclaimed the mousey girl. "I want to see her. Fania Muller is the prettiest girl I ever saw," she said by way of explanation to Donovan, "but I never saw her on the stage, and I'd like to."

Donovan looked at the superintendent a little

puzzled. The girl's remarks had so obviously embarrassed the man that he wondered why.

"Yah," said the German, "Fania is a pretty girl, and a gude girl if she would only stay to home."

In spite of his remark Donovan felt venom back of what he said, and there was a peculiar glitter in the close-set blue eyes that belied the tenderness in his tones.

"Isn't she in town?" asked the bobbed-haired girl.

"No, she's playing at Philadelphia."

"Your daughter is an actress?" Donovan asked quietly.

"Yah, in vaudeville."

Dr. Mabley coughed and a glance passed between him and the inspector. "Come on," said the latter. "Sorry to have intruded, ladies."

## CHAPTER EIGHT

AT 9 K Muller used his key again. "Mr. Gretchel ain't here," he explained.

They entered a foyer similar to all the others, with the dumb-waiter in the same place, but there the resemblance ceased, for the apartment was a typical artist's studio with dormer windows and a skylight.

The dumb-waiter door stood ajar; on it and the casing about it were blood stains; under the opening was a pool of blood congealed and almost dry. More spots led to the centre of the room, staining the white Persian rug upon the floor. There had evidently been a violent struggle, for a couple of chairs were overturned, a fragile vase of priceless worth lay in shattered fragments on the floor, a wine bottle was upset upon the table, two glasses were overturned, the dregs of wine from one of them staining the satin embroidery of the table scarf. The rope hangings which separated the foyer hall from the studio were torn down and trampled upon. There seemed to be blood everywhere.

The painting of a half-nude woman, evidently one Miss Hayden had posed for, was slashed across the centre, and in the middle of the rug, as though flung there in a fit of passion, lay a long, wicked-looking dagger, blood-stained and sinister-looking.

Donovan looked grimly at the examiner.

"Here's where our man was murdered," he said unnecessarily.

"Ach Gott!" groaned the German as though the sight of the place was too much for him.

An open window attracted Donovan's attention. Crossing to it, he noticed that it led to the fire-escape and that in turn led to the roof above. The rain had come in, and the floor and rug under it were soaking wet. On the casing were reddish marks which might be blood, but the water had obliterated any fingerprints.

"The murderer evidently came in through the

window," ventured the doctor. Donovan merely grunted. As he turned back to the room he saw half hidden in the velvet folds of an armchair the end of a gossamer bit of silk. Picking it up, he saw it was a woman's scarf such as are used with evening gowns. About it lingered the faint, illusive odor of an Oriental perfume that seemed vaguely familiar. With a distinct shock he remembered where he had smelled that perfume before. It had been worn by the red-haired girl, the wife of the murdered man. For a moment he was conscious of an acute pain; then he argued quickly that other women in the city probably used the same perfume, that Mrs. McNally was downtown at the time of the murder unless— He turned quickly to the physician.

"How long did you figure the man had been dead?"

"Several hours," was the reply. The medical man was examining the contents of the bottle, sniffing at the wine dregs left in the overturned glass with interest. "The body was stone-cold and rigid. But he was placed in the dumbwaiter before life had entirely left his body—before mortis had set in to stiffen his joints."

Mrs. McNally was jealous, she had a grievance against her husband—the scarf—Donovan thrust aside the thought angrily as though it were treachery to a new-born love. He held the fragile bit of silk in his hand, crushing it like a cobweb between his thumb and first finger. It was of peculiar pattern, a blending of all the orchid shades, the green predominating and shading into the delicate purple of the exotic plant.

Donovan extended the scarf toward the superintendent.

"Have you ever seen any one in the building wear this?"

The man's eyes widened, he swallowed hard, then he answered in a husky guttural:

"Yah. Mrs. McNally, she have one shust the same as dot."

Donovan thrust the bit of silk in his pocket without a word.

"This wine has been poisoned, Inspector," said the doctor, looking up. "As I thought, there is strychnine in the dregs; the poor devil was poisoned first and stabbed afterwards."

Donovan merely grunted.

"Lock the window, Muller," he said quietly. "We'll go back to 6 K."

## CHAPTER NINE

**B**ELOW the stairs the inspector found Tom Steele awaiting him.

"Thought there was no use of phoning all over the building for you," he said by way of greeting, "and I knew you'd be back here. Incidentally I've been looking over the lay of the land."

At his entrance Maryia Hayden started forward.

"Listen, Inspector," she said impatiently. "I have a theatre engagement; do you realize what time it is?"

"Do you realize a murder has been committed?" he answered. "I'm sorry you have been compelled to miss your amusement, but at such times as these parties must wait." He strode past her into the bedroom where the wife of the murdered man still lay. Closing the door behind him, he crossed over to the bed.

"Mrs. McNally," he said softly.

She opened her eyes and smiled wanly at him; that smile seemed to indicate that she looked upon him as a friend, and the inspector's heart leaped at its warmth, then grew cold suddenly as he realized what he must do and that probably he was going to hurt her very much.

He drew a chair up beside the bed and, hardly knowing that he did it, took one of her icy cold hands in his, gently pressing it in sympathy as he felt it flutter.

"Mrs. McNally, I am sorry to be compelled to ask you annoying questions at such a time, but you understand my position."

"Perfectly."

"Naturally you wish the murderer of your husband to be apprehended, don't you?"

She shuddered.

"Of course."

"Miss Hayden tells me that all was not as it should have been between yourself and him."

"Must we go into that?"

"I'm afraid that we must. I'm sorry."

"Oh, that's quite all right. I suppose I must get used to washing dirty linen in public before this terrible thing is forgotten. Miss Hayden told the truth. Things were very wrong with my husband and myself, although we have only been married a short time. I was very, very much in love with Harry when I married him, but on our wedding night he practically killed my love by telling me that he cared nothing whatever for me, that he had merely married me to revenge himself upon another woman! He even told me her name. You can imagine my sensations, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Donovan," he supplied.

"When I realized that he really loved Miss Hayden and had married me out of pique because they had quarreled, I refused to allow him to support me, but returned to my old position of stenographer which I had held before my marriage. At first I was insanely jealous, my pride, vanity and very soul were wounded. I was sure they continued to meet, and I was simply used as a blind to protect her name. She was not a good woman, Mr. Donovan; she simply used Harry until she got all his money, then she threw him over for a richer man. Mr. Gretchel is a very fine man, too good for an adventuress such as she is. I was guilty of pleading with her and begging her to let my husband alone. I thought, perhaps, if she did, he would in time forget her and come to care for me. She laughed

at me in a most humiliating manner, and told Harry what I had done. That made him furious at me, and the breach between us became wider. I have a temper; perhaps you have noticed my hair; it is indicative of my character. I can hate as well as love. I—I think I grew to despise the man I married. Oh, I know it is a terrible thing to tell you all this, you a stranger, but—but I have kept it all a secret for so long—I feel better telling it. He is dead now—I should feel differently toward him—but he made me suffer so—I cannot. The scandal is a fitting climax to our unhappy life together. I don't seem to care much what happens now."

Donovan was surprised at her intense bitterness.

"When did you see your husband last?"

"Yesterday morning. He was not home at all last night. Not that it was unusual for him to spend the night away from home; it wasn't. He and Miss Hayden often went away together for week-end trips." She smiled. "He knew I was aware of this, but did not even take the trouble to hide the fact. And yet she is going to marry another man."

"Mrs. McNally, didn't I understand you to say you had never seen Mr. Gretchel?"

A quick color flooded her cheeks.

"I lied to you," she answered. "I met him once."

"Where?" She did not reply. "Where?" He pulled out of his pocket the orchid-colored scarf. "You didn't by any chance call on him in his own apartment and leave this scarf?"

She gave a little frightened

"God help me, I did."

"When was that?"

"Last night. I had been out to dinner; I went upstairs after I came home."

"Why did you go?"

"Do—do I have to tell?"

"You may have to on a witness stand."

"Then I will."

"Mrs. McNally"—he leaned closer—"your husband was murdered in Harmon Gretchel's studio."

"What!" She rose to a sitting posture, her eyes dark with horror, her face ghastly in the shaded light. "Mr.—Mr. Gretchel didn't kill him, did he?"

"Why do you think he did?"

"I don't—oh, I don't—but—oh, my God, my God!" She threw herself back on the bed sobbing great body-racking sobs as she dug her head in the pillow.

"You didn't kill him yourself, did you?" The tone in which he put the question robbed it of its sting.

She shook her head.

"No, you know I didn't."

"You told Gretchel of his fiancée's relations with your husband, didn't you, Mrs. McNally?"

"Yes."

"And you think in his fury he murdered your

husband, and that indirectly you are to blame for Mr. McNally's death? Put your mind at rest on that score, Mrs. McNally; Harmon Gretchel did not kill your husband; a woman did."

## CHAPTER TEN

WITH morning arrived the man about whom there had been so much discussion. Almost immediately Inspector Donovan was requested to come to his studio. The latter found the artist very much as he had pictured him, a slim, almost esthetic-looking man with a beard slightly tinged with gray, and rather nice brown eyes. Donovan noted that he had worn a gray fedora hat and a gray top-coat before discarding his outer apparel.

The artist was very much upset by what had occurred, especially about the ruin of his painting. Donovan found him pacing the floor, only holding himself in leash by the greatest effort.

"My God, man!" he exclaimed upon seeing the inspector, "don't you realize what a damnable situation this places me in? My place is practically ruined! Look at that picture! My masterpiece, and my rugs, my bric-a-brac! I can't understand it! How did McNally get in my apartment, anyway? Who was here to kill him? Why choose my place to do it? Great Lord, Inspector, this thing has got to be cleared up at once, or it will drive me insane!"

"We are trying our best to do so," Donovan answered dryly; he felt an intuitive dislike to the man who, though good-looking and obviously sincere in his statement that he had no knowledge about the murder, seemed a trifle lacking in strength of character.

"And these men here, they won't allow me to get the place in order. They say you left orders that nothing was to be touched."

"I did."

"But, great Scott, man! I can't stay in a place looking like this!"

"In that case you had better go to a hotel, for until we ascertain more than we know at present things will have to stay as they are."

Gretchel lit a cigarette and puffed on it viciously.

"It's damned unpleasant," he muttered. "I had no use for the beggar in life, and he's causing me no end of trouble in death. Who do you think killed him? Have you any clues?"

"Yes. I suppose you know he was wearing clothing like yours when the body was found?"

"So these chaps told me. He flattered me by copying my style, though I don't thank him for it."

"He also wore a false beard and had your initials on his hatband."

Gretchel whistled. "By Jove, that's strange!"

"Mr. Gretchel, have you any enemies?"

"I—why—er—I don't know. I suppose so;

most every one has some one who dislikes him. Why do you ask?"

"Because I think the person who killed McNally intended to kill you and mistook him for you!"

"My God!"

"You didn't by any chance put strychnine in that decanter of wine, did you?"

"Strychnine? Certainly not."

"It was there, and was evidently intended for you to drink. Who hates you so much she would have gone such lengths to secure your death?"

"She?" The artist turned very pale. He whirled about and looked at the ruined picture of his fiancée. "She? You—you know a woman killed the man?"

"Yes. I know a woman killed McNally!"

"Do you—know—who—she is?"

"Do you?"

"How could I? I don't know anything at all about the man, let alone the woman he knew."

"Then you don't think Miss Hayden might have done it?"

Gretchel's face became livid; he turned on Donovan as though he were going to strike him, then he laughed uneasily.

"What's the use of arguing with you detective chaps? I know you don't think she had anything to do with the poor devil's death, or you wouldn't have spoken of it to me; but I'd be grateful if you kept her name out of it, please."

Donovan sauntered to the window, joining Tom Steele, who had apparently been staring outside at the river beyond, but who in reality had been sizing up the distance from the window to the roof.

"Say, Chief," said the young man in an undertone, "ask him if he knows a girl named Fania Muller."

"The superintendent's daughter?"

"She's a vaudeville performer; she may be the old man's daughter."

Donovan turned once more to the artist.

"Mr. Gretchel, did a girl named Fania Muller ever pose for you?"

The artist started perceptibly.

"Why do you ask that?"

"I fancied I saw a likeness of her in some of the canvases you have on the wall."

"Yes, she was my model for about a year. Why?"

"No reason whatever except knowing she was a beautiful girl, and that, as she lives here, I fancied you might employ her."

"She doesn't live here," said Gretchel dryly; "her father was opposed to her profession, and she left home."

Tom Steele whirled about abruptly.

"Do you know where Miss Muller does live?"

"No, she hasn't been in my employ for three months. I am under the impression that she is on the road filling her vaudeville engagements. What are you driving at, anyway—you—?"

He was interrupted by the jangle of a telephone bell.

"A gentleman wants you, Mr. Donovan," he said, with a malicious smile and a satirical accent on the word gentleman. Donovan took the receiver from his hand. It was Patrolman Burke on the wire.

"Hello! That you, Chief?"

"Yeh; what is it?"

"You know that party you had me keep a watch out for?"

"Yes."

"Well, he ain't showed up again, but I've learned the number of his room, and I've been keeping my eyes peeled. Five minutes ago a woman came out of the room though, and she walked like the guy did we thought was Gretchel. What'll I do, shadow her or stick tight?"

Donovan scratched his head, he turned to Tom and repeated what Burke had told him. Tom smiled.

"Have him go after the woman," he said, "and if she attempts to get away, fake an arrest; anything to detain her."

"Good boy!" exclaimed Donovan, and turned to the telephone again. "Follow the woman. I'll send some one down there."

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

LATER in the day Donovan called at apartment 6 K ostensibly to see Mrs. McNally, though he pretended he wished to look about the place again. She received him with a wan little smile, but it held a welcome.

"Do you know anything yet?" she cried eagerly. "Mr. Gretchel is back. What have you learned?"

"That a woman killed your husband!"

"Another! Surely there isn't another woman in his life?"

"No; your husband received the blow that was aimed at Harmon Gretchel."

"But why—why was he dressed as Mr. Gretchel?"

"That is what we will have to find out. The murderess will tell us when we find her."

Tom Steele stood in the lobby of the Madison Hotel apparently deeply engrossed in the evening paper which he held up before his face, but by clever management he was able to carefully study a woman who had just entered the lobby after dismissing a taxi. She sauntered slowly across the corridor to the room clerk's desk and asked for her key in a low, throaty voice; and when the clerk gave it to her she walked to the elevator. She was a very tall woman with a slim, athletic body, clothed in a gray squirrel coat and hat of the same fur. The hair that crept out from under the turban was as yellow as a canary's breast and as shimmery as spun gold. He had a fleeting glimpse of wonderfully chiseled features and midnight blue eyes; then the woman disappeared.

Tom crossed to the room clerk.

"What's her name?" he asked.

The clerk smiled, and gave him a knowing wink.

"Got a crush?" he snickered. "You're about the sixth guy to-day wantin' to know who she is. That's Fania Muller; she does a strong act at the Palace; believe me, she's a pippin for looks."

"What's the number of her room?" Tom asked casually.

"Forty-nine. But nothing doing. She ain't that kind."

For reply Tom flipped back the lapel of his coat and showed his badge.

"I want to see her on business," he answered. "And I don't want to be announced."

The clerk whistled.

Tom entered the elevator and got off at the ninth floor. At first his knock brought no response, then the door was opened a little way and Fania Muller asked him what he wanted.

"I am an officer," he said quietly. "I want to talk to you, Miss Muller."

The woman opened the door wide enough to admit him, and he entered the room, seating himself in the chair to which she motioned.

"Well," she said. She was very pale, but her voice was steady and her gaze did not waver. "I suppose you want to see me about the McNally murder?"

"I do. But what makes you think I do?"

"Because there is no other reason for you to be here. I am quite ready to tell you everything. I bungled it all so fearfully and I've nothing to live for anyway."

"You killed McNally?"

"Yes, I killed him. I thought you knew."

"I did, but I wanted you to tell me you did."

She laughed.

"You are very clever, aren't you? I've heard of you, Mr. Steele, and admired you. I thought I was clever also, but I made a horrible mess of everything."

"You don't have to tell me any more if you don't wish to," he said, with a feeling of compassion, wondering at her marvelous composure. "You can wait for your lawyer's advice if you like."

"I shall not need a lawyer. You had best let me tell you everything before it is too late."

"Too late!" he gasped. "You mean——?"

"That when I saw you in the lobby I knew my doom was sealed, that when you knocked on my door I took the only way out. I have poisoned myself. That is better than the chair."

Tom gave an exclamation of horror and started for the telephone, but she stopped him.

"You will be losing precious moments; no doctor can save me, and if he did it would only be to send me to a terrible death which I don't deserve. Be merciful and let me die this way."

Tom merely called the telephone girl, and told her to get Inspector Donovan to him at once. The woman smiled pitifully at him, and sank back into a great chair as though too fatigued to

speak; after a little she aroused herself and began softly, growing hysterical as her story reached its height.

"I didn't intend to kill McNally. You, who are so clever, must already know that. I loved Harmon Gretchel; once he loved me. In the beginning I was his model. That was several years ago, when I was quite a young girl, living with my father. He saw me about the building and thought I was beautiful and asked me to pose for him. At first my father opposed the idea, but the money that Harmon offered me overcame his scruples. I loved Harmon from the very start. Of course it was an old story, only he never promised to marry me; he just took me away from my sordid home life, educated me for better things, started me upon the stage, then when another woman came along he dropped me as though I had never existed. I think his treatment made me insane, for I did nothing but brood over what he had done to me, how he had separated me from my family, how he had made me an outcast and how he had thrown me over for a woman no better than I. Finally I determined to kill him.

"One day I summoned enough courage to go to see my father. He was not at home, or he would have shown me the door, for he thinks I am a vile, unspeakable creature. My mother was there, and when I saw how she suffered through me it made me more than ever determined to kill the man who had ruined my life. My father's pass-keys were on the table, and I took them away with me. I am a tall woman, built not unlike a man; I can dress as a man and hide my sex. I bought some clothing exactly like Harmon always wears; that was easy, as he always wears gray and a fedora hat. I went to a theatrical wiggy and bought a beard. I practiced wearing it until I had a perfect disguise. Several times I went up to the Normal Apartments and got in and out of the elevator without the boy suspecting I was not Harmon Gretchel. I knew when Harmon was away from home, so that I ran no chance of meeting him. At last I decided the time to kill him had come. I was going to enter his apartment when he was away, poison his wine and leave. I felt sure I had made all arrangements. What I did not know was that some one else hated Harmon Gretchel as much as I did and also had a key to his apartment. I entered safely enough in my disguise, and placed the poison in the wine decanter where he was sure to get it, when I heard a key inserted in the lock. Scarcely knowing what I did, I dodged into the bedroom and under the bed. I saw Harry McNally enter the room. I could tell by the way he paced the floor he was as passionately angry as I was. Then to my horror I saw him stop before the table and pour a drink of the poisoned wine into a glass. I wanted to cry out to him not to do it, but I was afraid. That would brand me as a murderer. I saw him swallow it. Everything got black with me; then the next thing

that I knew I heard him give a terrible cry, writhing on the floor. I was frantic, I did not know what to do, he would surely die, and if his screams continued he would bring a crowd and I would be lost. Almost wild, I snatched up a knife and plunged it in his back with all my force, killing him instantly.

"It was a horrible thing to do, but he was in torture, and I knew he was going to die anyway. It seemed I could not have my revenge on Harmon; then suddenly it occurred to me that if his clothing were found on the dead man it would seem as if he had killed him. I know now that that was an utterly stupid idea. But I stripped off the overcoat I was wearing and the hat and put them on McNally and the beard. Then I pulled the body to the dumb-waiter. I am very strong, but he proved almost more than I could handle. I did not think the dumb-waiter would drop with the body as it did. I had figured on it remaining stationary at Harmon's floor. When I saw it fall so quickly it frightened me terribly. I snatched up a hat and coat belonging to Harmon and slashing the picture on the easel I made my

escape through the fire-escape and into the corridor through a window which led into an apartment next door. That is all except——"

"What?"

"I'm sorry I killed McNally, but I wish I had gotten Harmon."

"But I saw you with a beard."

"Yes. I bought two and still kept up my disguise until I got home."

When Donovan and his medical examiner arrived the woman was dying. Tom had written down her confession, and with the little strength she still possessed she signed the paper.

A year later as Tom opened his morning mail he chuckled heartily and handed an engraved card to his wife to read.

"Well, the old duffer is landed at last!" he shouted.

"What on earth, dear?"

"Read that. Larry Donovan is going to be married and we are invited to the wedding. It took a little red-haired widow to snap him up!"

## HYPNOTISM FAILS TO END THE EVIL SPELL

MONTREAL'S financial, military and social circles are deeply stirred by the murder of William Holland, brokerage house manager, by Major ("Bob") Griffith, who surrendered at Police Headquarters ten hours after the crime, while the detectives were working on the theory of suicide.

At the inquest January 15 a verdict of murder was returned against Major Griffith, who was arraigned, charged with the crime, and committed to bail.

For two years Major Griffith had complained to his friends that Bill Holland was exercising an evil influence over him through hypnotism. He said Holland had hypnotized him and since then he had been unable to control his own mind, as Holland's mind was the stronger. He outlined a plan for impairing Holland's health by keeping him awake at night. This plan he put into effect, sleeping himself during the day and roaming about all night, stating that the minds of Holland and himself were so inter-related that Holland could not sleep if Griffith kept awake and concentrated his mind on him.

The most detailed account of the delusion was given by a well-known business man who knew the Major intimately.

"Griffith came to me several months ago," he said, "and complained that he was a victim of hypnotism. I smiled at him, thinking he was joshing me. He became irritated and asked me if I thought he was crazy. I assured him I did not, and the story which he told me was this:

"He had met Holland at Steagathe. He did not explain the circumstances, but I took it that it was in a social sort of way. The time was,

apparently, about two years ago. Holland, he said, had placed him under a hypnotic spell and had not released him.

"Griffith said that day and night Holland haunted him. He was not able to sleep. Holland could keep him awake while Holland slept, and he could not sleep while Holland was awake.

"He had determined that counter hypnotic influence was the only solution of the trouble. He (Griffith) would study hypnotism; in fact, he was already doing it. He would become more proficient as a student of the occult than Holland, and then he would have his revenge.

"He would throw a spell over Holland, break the one that held him, and then subject Holland to the same uncanny treatment that he had been, and was still, undergoing. He would fix it so Holland would never get any sleep. Griffith seemed to relish this last thought. It was quite evident to me that there was no use arguing with him about it. I had friends with me at the time and thought the sooner the conversation ended the fewer the explanations I would have to make.

"Bob seemed relieved when he had unburdened himself of his strange recital. It perplexed me at the time, but I passed it off as a transitory hallucination, the cause of which I could not imagine. From that day until this, unless I happened to run into Bob, I never paid a moment's attention to the episode. To-day it comes back to me with great force. It is evident that instead of diminishing the delusion became aggravated until it culminated in this tragedy.

"Griffith never hinted at a reason why Holland should have desired to cast any malign spell over him. It was an inexplicable aberration."

# The Man Who Was Guilty

By D. L. RADWAY

IT was seven-fifteen a. m. when Douglas Martin was aroused from a final nap before rising by the persistent ringing of the telephone extension near his bed.

"Humph! What's doing at this hour?" he asked himself, reaching for the instrument. "Hello!"

"Hello!" The response came somewhat excitedly. "I want Mr. Martin, Douglas Martin, private detective."

"Talking!" said Martin tersely.

"Oh!" exclaimed the other. "I am Frank Harris, your old college chum. I'm in a devil of a mess at headquarters. Arrested for the murder of Jack Keene, and Heaven knows I'm innocent. Will you come right over and take the case for me?"

"I should say I would!" cried Martin, suppressing his amazement. "Are you at headquarters?"

"Yes. I'm talking from Deputy Blake's office. Get a move on, will you?"

"I'll be there in half an hour," Martin now said quickly.

He sprang from his bed and began to dress. He was an erect, attractive man of twenty-eight, college-trained and set up like an athlete. Virile mental power and rare concentrative ability, with the invincible will, energy and perseverance which, with keen insight and discrimination, usually masters almost any problem—all were reflected in his smooth-shaved, impressive face, and had contributed materially to his very enviable success as a private detective.

He was not long in getting away in his own speedy roadster. A little more than half an hour had passed when he stopped in front of police headquarters.

He hurried through the corridor to Deputy Blake's private office with a feeling that Harris was innocent. Harris was a wealthy young stockbroker, and the idea that he had murdered Jack Keene, the famous eccentric collector, was beyond Martin's present depth of reasoning.

He came to the door of the deputy's private office and was about to open it, when loud voices coming from within made him hesitate.

Listening eagerly he detected two voices. Of one he could be sure. It was the brusque, gruff voice of Deputy Blake.

"You admit being with Keene last night and playing a game of poker. You also admit quarreling over the game and that Keene struck you. The——"

"Good heavens!" interrupted a firm voice. "Why—why—you still believe I killed him?"

"Believe it? I know it," Blake laughed in

mirthless mockery. "You sure are clever trying to make me believe you're innocent." There was a pause and then Blake fairly shouted the question at the other. "Where did you hide the Lapis-Lazuli?"

"The what?"

"That's right. Pretend you're innocent," Blake laughed again. "I asked you where you hid the Lapis-Lazuli. Haven't you heard about it? Last week the papers devoted quite a space to the fact that Jack Keene had recently purchased the most famous gem in the world—the Lapis-Lazuli. It formerly belonged to the Duke of Tuscany and is considered almost priceless. Didn't you see the paper?"

"No," answered the other. "I was recovering from an attack of the grippe and did not even glance at a newspaper all week."

"A likely story," sneered Blake. "We have learned that Keene has been carrying the gem about his person because he did not trust safes. And when we searched him it was missing."

"Use a little common sense," declared the other. "Why should I murder Keene when I had no knowledge of the gem?"

"You knew about it all right," Blake gruffly retorted. "And after Keene struck you last night you decided to be revenged, so you killed him and stole the gem. There's the whole thing in a nutshell."

"Nonsense!" the other laughed a bit derisively. "You make a mountain of a mole hill, Deputy Blake. Oh, I'll admit the circumstances are against me. But I've told you the truth."

"If you won't tell me where you hid the Lapis-Lazuli, I shall be obliged to place you in a cell immediately," Blake declared with increasing severity.

"No, no, Blake, you won't!" Detective Martin entered while speaking. He smiled and checked the deputy with a gesture. "You'll do nothing of the kind. You have been going a bit fast. I'll vouch for Harris' fine character, Blake, and be very glad to do so," he glibly declared, as he looked at Harris, a tall, well-built man of thirty, with a strong, clean-cut face as drawn and pallid as that of an opium victim.

"You will, eh?" Blake queried sharply. He was a compact, muscular man of fifty, brusque and outspoken, at times offensively aggressive, black-eyed, square-jawed and as dark as a Spaniard.

"I certainly will," Martin told him. "Frank Harris is all right, and as honest as the day is long, take my word for it; I was about to enter, but paused when I heard you talking. I heard all that passed between you."

He walked over to Harris and noticed that quivering lips and the convulsive clenching of his slender white hands told of nervousness and restlessness. He patted Harris on the back and said: "Cheer up, old man, the police department is always blundering. They leap first, but they don't even look afterward unless some one makes them."

"Thanks," said Harris, as he clasped Martin's hand in a friendly squeeze.

"Tell me about it, Frank."

"It's like this," explained Harris, "a couple of plain-clothes men routed me out of bed in my apartment in the Touraine at the unholy hour of 6:45 this morning and asked me if I had seen Jack Keene lately. I told them I was with Jack in his apartment for an hour last evening playing poker, after we had dined together in the Touraine grill room. You know I only became acquainted with Jack two weeks ago when he sat at my table in the grill room."

"He still sticks to the same old story," sneeringly remarked Blake. "If I——"

"Harris is doing the talking at present, Blake," interjected Martin. Then of Harris, he asked, "Is that all?"

"No."

"At what hour did you go up to Keene's apartment?"

"We went up together at exactly seven o'clock. And I left his apartment at eight o'clock after our quarrel, which resulted in his striking me."

"Did you become angry with him?"

"Why—yes. I was a bit angry at first, but after thinking it over I decided it was only an outbreak of his temper. So I had decided to visit him this morning and ask him to accept my apology."

"Where did you go after you left Keene last night?"

"I took a taxi to the home of Miss Ward, my fiancée, on Beacon street. Took her and her mother to the theatre, and after the show we had dinner at the Cafe Tomfohrde. Then I rode home with them."

"And then?" asked Martin.

"It was two o'clock when I left the Wards' and came to the Touraine. I played billiards until about five this morning and then went up to bed."

Martin looked at him keenly for a moment. Then, turning to the deputy, he asked, "Will you send a plain-clothes man to verify this?" After the deputy had sent a man out in a taxi, he added: "Now tell me what you know about this?"

"It sounds as if everything has been told," sneered Blake. "But I've got a little something to say. At six this morning a Mr. Burke, who occupies the apartment adjoining Keene's, came home from some party and went to his rooms. He saw a little dried line of blood running under the door that connects the two apartments, a door that is always bolted on both sides. He couldn't rouse Keene and got the manager, who went in with a pass-key. Keene was dead on the

floor, a bullet hole through his head. The manager phoned for the police, and when we arrived we searched him and discovered that the Lapis-Lazuli was missing. But he still had his apartment key in his pocket. There was no revolver in the room!"

"Your story is convincing enough, Blake," said Martin thoughtfully, "but if Harris murdered Keene, how could he have locked the door again after committing the murder?"

"That's easily accounted for," the deputy told him. "After Harris murdered Keene, he locked the door and placed the key back in Keene's pocket, where he had found it. Then he opened the window, stepped out onto the fire-escape, closed the window and walked up the fire-escape to his apartment, which is on the tenth floor."

"Have you any proof of what you say?" queried Martin, frowning.

"Proof be hanged!" Blake laughed derisively. "When you use a little headwork you don't need any proof. But if the evidence isn't strong enough, I'd advise you to call up Henry Burke at the Hotel Touraine and hear what he has to say." Without replying, Martin reached for the telephone and put the receiver to his ear. Harris told him the number and he got Burke almost immediately.

"Hello! Is this Henry Burke? This is Detective Martin speaking. I'm working on the Keene case and have been informed that you know something about it."

"Why—er—yes, I do," came the response. "I overheard Harris and Keene quarreling last night. I was about to go out when I heard loud voices talking in Keene's apartment. Stepping over to the door which connects our two apartments, I heard Harris say: 'You slipped that one from the bottom!'"

"Tut, tut," came Keene's smooth tones. "Don't come the baby act just because you're losing."

"You lie, you card marker!" cried Harris.

"I heard a table overturned, the scuffling of feet, the sound of a blow. I didn't listen any longer, but rode down in the elevator and continued on my way to a social affair. At six this morning when I returned I saw a dried line of blood running under the door that connects our apartments. I pounded on Keene's door to rouse him, but failed, so I got the manager. You probably know the rest."

"You relate the conversation very accurately, Mr. Burke. Are you sure it was Harris speaking?"

"Yes, it was Harris. I heard them speaking together during dinner in the grill room last evening. There is no mistaking his voice."

"Thanks," said Martin bluntly, and he hung up the receiver.

"Well, are you satisfied?" Blake spoke with a sneer.

"Yes, I'm satisfied," Martin said with a momentary significant look at Harris.

"Good heavens!" Harris grasped his arm. "Do

you believe I killed him?" he cried. "Do you mean to say—"

"Keep your nerve, Frank. I believe in your innocence. They won't lock you up for a while. The deputy will keep you here until after the first investigation." Turning to Blake, he said: "I am going over to Keene's apartment. I suppose the medical examiner is there?"

"He ought to be, by this time."

A little later Detective Martin with the manager of the Touraine and two plain-clothes men joined the medical examiner in Keene's apartment.

It consisted of a huge, high-ceilinged, studio-like chamber with a gallery which ran around its four sides, a bedroom, bath and square entrance hall. There was an air of mellow antiquity about the whole interior, which the soft-toned rugs and hangings, the carved old furniture and the few but rare paintings and exquisite bits of statuary served to accentuate.

On the floor near the middle of the room, with his arms extended, his dead, white face upturned, lay the portly form of Jack Keene. His half-closed, filmy eyes stared at the ceiling; his stiff lips were drawn back into a faint, cynical smile.

"Has rigor-mortis set in?" Martin asked of the medical examiner, who was standing near the dead man.

"Yes," he replied.

"How long has Keene been dead?"

"Always impossible to tell accurately between the time rigor-mortis is complete and before the separation of blood corpuscles begins. He may have been dead from five to fifteen hours."

A cuckoo clock on the wall shrilled a single call, denoting the half-hour after eight. Martin studied the clock carefully.

"Any one touched this clock?" he asked suddenly.

None of them had, they declared.

"Who else has been in this room?" he insisted.

"Only Mr. Burke and myself," volunteered the manager.

"Kindly note the time by this cuckoo clock,"

Martin asked of every one.

"Eight-thirty-three," replied one of the plain-clothes men. The others nodded.

"I need witnesses, gentlemen," Martin told them, as he reached in his pocket and brought forth a pencil, "so kindly note this mark I make where these clock weights hang against the wall. Are they correct, Mr. Langdon?"

The manager nodded.

"Now I will draw the weights up as high as possible. I want one of you men to watch these weights and see that no one touches them. When they get back down to these marks on the wall, or exactly halfway down, make a careful note of the elapsed time."

Martin pulled up the weights by the loose chains. Then one of the plain-clothes men volunteered to keep a watchful eye on the clock, al-

though none of them had any idea of what this strange experiment would prove.

The manager, at Martin's suggestion, called in the night clerk, night elevator boy and night manager of the billiard room. Their stories tallied. Harris came home about two-fifteen, they said, played billiards with young Vanardy until about five, when the elevator boy took Harris up to his apartment on the tenth floor. That was all.

The ringing of the telephone broke the silence which followed the interview. Martin walked over to the stand by the window and picked up the instrument.

"Hello! That you, Martin? This is Blake. The plain-clothes man has just returned. He has verified Harris' statement concerning Miss Ward and the theatre and brought back the check from Tomfohrde's, signed by Harris.

"Fine!" exclaimed Martin, placing the telephone back on the stand. As he did so he noticed an object on the window-sill, partly hidden by the heavy curtain. He picked it up and discovered that it was a man's brown kid glove. Seeing that the others had not observed him, he hurriedly pushed it in his coat pocket and began a search of the rooms. He did not find any clue, however, and finally accepted the manager's invitation to breakfast in the grill room.

At eleven o'clock that morning, after completing a search of the hotel, Martin was talking to Deputy Blake over the telephone.

"Hello! This is Martin. I'm going to ask Mr. Burke and the manager of the Touraine over to your office this afternoon about three o'clock, if you haven't any objection. Thanks. And be sure to have Harris there. Good-by."

Three o'clock that afternoon found Mr. Burke, Mr. Langdon, Frank Harris, Deputy Blake and Detective Martin sitting in Blake's private office. Martin was speaking.

"This morning when I was in Keene's apartment, my attention was drawn to a cuckoo clock on the wall. It was eight-thirty-three by the clock when I took my pencil and made a mark where the clock weights hung against the wall. Then I drew the weights up as high as possible and had a plain-clothes man watch the clock very carefully.

"A few hours later I was back in Keene's apartment. The body had been removed. The plain-clothes man was still sitting near the cuckoo clock, smoking and watching the weights which were almost imperceptibly descending. I examined them and carefully measured the distance from the clock to the marks on the wall below. The weights were exactly midway between the clock and the marks.

"It had taken three and three-quarters hours for those weights to go down halfway to that mark. That means it would take them seven and a half hours to get down to the mark where I found them at eight-thirty. The clock was running and on time. Some one must have been in

that room, alive, and drawn up the weights about one o'clock this morning, as that is the only method of winding a cuckoo clock. The medical examiner says Keene must have been dead five hours at eight o'clock, as rigor-mortis had taken place. Some time between one and three o'clock this morning, then, Keene was killed. Your own men, deputy, have accounted for every minute of Harris' time from eight o'clock last night until five this morning. At one he was dining at Tomfohrde's, at two he was leaving the Ward home. From two-fifteen until five he was playing billiards downstairs in the Touraine."

"You are right, Martin," Blake reluctantly admitted. "It could not have been Harris, as far as I can see. But who did kill Keene?"

Turning to Burke, Martin continued: "This morning when you were down to breakfast, I searched your apartment."

Burke's face went a shade paler as the detective approached his chair. He took out a handkerchief and wiped his perspiring face.

"I searched every drawer and receptacle in the apartment, which yielded to my skeleton keys. I found toilet articles and clothing in the bedroom, playing cards, chips, sheet music, old magazines and photographs of college athletics were all that rewarded me in the living room. Even the desk yielded merely a neatly labeled assortment of receipted bills and scraps of notes of recent date signed 'Bill' and 'Sam' and 'Ben,' and all referring to some engagement for a fishing or hunting trip or the theatre or a 'quiet little game.'"

"Feeling that I was perhaps wasting valuable time after all, I opened the lowest and last drawer in the desk and ran my hand idly through the collection of old theatre programs it contained, when my fingers came into contact with something cold. Drawing it out—" Suiting action to his words, he drew a metallic object from his pocket and handed it to the deputy.

"A thirty-two!" exclaimed Blake, while the others looked on in amazement. "One cartridge gone. This is the toy that turned the trick evidently."

"I didn't kill him," cried Burke, jumping to his feet. He squared his shoulders and with firm tread walked up to the desk. His flaxen hair was rumpled and there was a strange fire in the depths of the blue eyes.

"I didn't kill him," he repeated vehemently.

Blake smiled. "I'd like to think you didn't, but the case is evidently against you. You wanted to get possession of the Lapis-Lazuli, so you killed Keene and stole the gem, knowing that Harris would be blamed for the crime."

"I didn't—I didn't! That revolver you found in the desk isn't mine. I never saw it before," Burke cried huskily.

"It will be necessary to search you," Martin declared firmly, "since I did not find the gem in your apartment."

Then with a cry, Burke leaped towards the

door. With surprising agility, Martin thrust him back and shoved him into a chair. His hand darted to his pocket, drawing out a gleaming object, and in a twinkling the young man's hands were secured with a pair of steel links. Squirming and writhing in impotent rage, he glared at the detective as the latter began to search his pockets. A delicately worded love letter, watch, card case, wallet and a few cigars were all that rewarded him.

"What did you do with that gem?" asked Blake sharply. "Did you sell it? Or have you hidden it in some secret drawer or—"

"By the way, Burke," interjected Martin, "you've worn those handcuffs long enough. I knew all the time they didn't belong on you, but I wanted to spring a little surprise."

In a few moments the young man's hands had been freed of the steel links. The others in the room looked dazed and wondering, as if developments had come too fast for their minds to keep pace with them. They started, as Martin, with the links in his hand, whirled on Langdon and snapped the manacles around his wrists.

"Why—what—what do you mean?" stuttered the manager of the Touraine, his face a ghastly gray.

"You ought to know, 'Kid Glove' Barton alias Peter Langdon."

The manager staggered back. The detective's words had cut like steel. Step by step he retreated towards the wall, Martin following.

"You were pretty clever, Barton, when you landed a job as manager at the Touraine two months ago, in the hope that you would grab something big. And you were equally clever when you climbed the fire-escape at two o'clock this morning and stole the Lapis-Lazuli, after shooting Jack Keene by using a muffled revolver. Not knowing of Harris' quarrel with Keene, you thought you would direct suspicion towards Burke by climbing in his window and placing the revolver in his desk drawer. Your plans might have succeeded if you hadn't accidentally dropped your monogrammed glove on Keene's window-sill.

"I followed those initials, Barton, and searched your apartment. Concealed in one of those beautiful hollow picture frames I found your diary, which is enough self-evidence to convict you for life. And I also found this." Martin handed the awe-stricken deputy a small plush-covered box. With a pressure of his thumb the lid flew back, disclosing a wonderful bluish purple gem.

With eyes bulging and hands clawing at his throat, Barton tumbled into a chair. His whole body writhed in physical and mental torment, and hoarse groans and wheezes sounded in his throat. He gazed shudderingly at the detective.

"Yes—I—I—killed him," he stammered.

A grin wrinkled Martin's face. Glancing at the amazed group in the room, he said: "Seems to me if I was to commit a murder, I'd do it up right."

# The Mysterious Mark "XX"

By J. T. BROUGHAM

ONE night I was returning to a hotel at which I was stopping in Baltimore, where I was then employed as a detective by the United States Internal Revenue Service. A closed taxicab dashed by at terrific speed, and from it issued the startling cry of

"Murder! Help! Murder!"

The street was a lonely one, and deserted for the night. Impelled by a natural impulse, I dashed in pursuit of the machine.

Suddenly the door of the vehicle was dashed open, and a man pitched out head first, striking the ground heavily, while without slackening its speed the cab dashed onward and vanished around a neighboring corner.

I rushed to the man, who lay where he had fallen. I had an electric flashlight, and turning on the light, I flashed it in the man's face as I raised him from the ground.

He was a rough-looking fellow, in boots, coarse clothing, and upon his head he wore a felt hat.

He had been shot and was dying as I raised him in my arms.

"They have killed me. The girl in the taxi—Lena—save her," he said, with a groan.

"What girl? Speak more plainly if you can. Who shot you?" I demanded.

"Oh, my God, I am dying. Curse Diamond! The marks on my foot—the marks will help you; save the girl, oh, save—oh, oh!"

A final gasp, and the unknown was dead.

I looked at the man's boots, and upon the leg of the right I saw two marks like a XX in chalk.

Under startling circumstances that mark had met my eyes a month previous in Maryland.

While on the trail of some illicit distillers I had, in company with a fellow detective named Burt James, run a band of "Mooners" to their secret still in the desert land of the "eastern shore," as that part of the State was called.

We crept slyly up to the place to take observations for a future raid, when we saw the mark "XX" on the door.

An hour afterward the Moonshiners burned the place to the ground, and within three days Burt James was found dead by the roadside. Upon his coat I saw again the partially erased marks, XX.

That there was a meaning and a mystery to those marks, I was sure.

It occurred to me that the man who died in my arms had been connected with the Moonshiners—perhaps the very gang I was still hunting—for I had determined to ferret out Burt's assassin.

I examined him closely, but found no clue to his identity, then I hastened to summon the wagon and had the body taken to the morgue.

There it remained unrecognized, and was interred after the usual time had elapsed.

The mystery of the mark, XX, puzzled me for days.

Among the Moonshiners I knew no one by the name of Diamond. There was a strong league of the rascals in that part of the state, and only a few of the leading spirits were known to me by name. Only two or three, whom I never could, up to this time, succeed in arresting, were known to me by sight. One of these was a red-headed and red-bearded dwarf of prodigious strength, called Mat Male.

I tried to trace the taxicab, but the attempt was a failure.

The following week I was working up a clue to a new location of the Moonshiners, some thirty miles back in the country from Baltimore, when I met with another surprising adventure.

Just at nightfall I was passing a stone house on my way to a forest where I believed the secret still to have been established, when from one of the windows of the house some one threw a stone. It fell at my feet. I picked it up.

Secured to the stone was a note scratched with a burnt match on a bit of brown paper.

"Save me! I am a prisoner in this private madhouse, but I am sane, if the loss of Lena has not turned my brain."

The word Lena fixed my attention, and I resolved to attempt to see the author of that note. Accordingly I concealed myself in a hedge until I saw all the lights in the house extinguished, then I approached it.

There was a roofed balcony all around it.

I climbed up one of the supports, and gained a position under the window from which the note had been flung. The window was crossed by iron bars.

I tapped upon the glass, and presently a woman came to the window and raised the sash.

"I am the man who picked up a note you flung out, and would help you," I explained. "What happened?"

"My name is Madge Lovell," the woman said, "and myself and sister are the heiresses of Major Randolph Lovell, of Richmond, Virginia. There is a plot on foot to secure our fortune, and perhaps to cause our death. We were abducted while out driving near the city of Richmond a week or so ago, and brought here by a man called Richard Diamond. Six days ago Lena was taken from this house by Diamond."

"I will help you if I can. But tell me more of this man Diamond. I read an account of the abduction of the Lovell sisters in the papers at the time, but your given names were not mentioned.

I assure you that the community in which you formerly resided is greatly excited over your fate," I said.

"Damond is a rejected suitor of my sister Lena's, and is a member of a band of men engaged in the illicit manufacture of whisky," said Madge Lovell.

I saw she was perfectly sane.

"Have you no friend who might have personally attempted to rescue you or your sister? Who might have suspected that Damond had a hand in causing your mysterious disappearance?" I asked.

"There was one Ralph Seymore, a poor mill-hand, formerly employed by my father, who dared to tell Lena that he loved her. We thought he only wanted our money, and, as Lena did not care for him, she, of course, repulsed him, and my father discharged the poor fellow. I am confident that he might suspect Damond, for, in Seymore's presence, Damond swore to be revenged on Lena for refusing him, and upon me for counseling her to do so. I will trust you with a secret. I loved Ralph Seymore, although Lena did not, and yet he never suspected it."

"Describe Seymore to me," I requested.

The girl accurately described the man who had been murdered in the taxicab in Baltimore, and who had died in my arms.

In a careful way, so as to startle her as little as possible, I broke the news to Madge Lovell.

She sank to the floor, and for a moment she was overcome with grief for the death of the man whom she secretly loved. Recovering her grief she sprang to her feet, her eyes flashing and her bosom heaving with emotion.

"They have killed the only man I ever loved, and I swear I'll be revenged on Dick Damond. They call me 'Mad Madge' here, and the day shall come when my enemies will tremble at the thought of my vengeance," cried the girl in frenzied tones.

At that moment I heard some one approaching the house, and, slipping a steel file and a saw for cutting iron bars into the girl's hands, I said:

"With these you can cut the bars on this window, reach the roof of the porch, and escape. I will await you on the edge of the grove nearest the house." As I spoke I pointed to a grove at a little distance.

I crept down the support that sustained the roof of the porch, and gained the shelter of a clump of ornamental shrubbery just as a man came up the walk.

He was the red-headed dwarf, Mat Male, who belonged, as I knew, to the Moonshiners.

He gave a peculiar ring at the door-bell, and it was opened by an old fellow, whom I afterwards knew to be the keeper of the private mad-house.

Mat Male handed him an eight-ounce bottle.

"Here is the stuff Damond sent. You are to give the gal Mad Madge a dose of it in her coffee

in the morning, and she'll be fixed for a funeral," said the fellow in low tones.

The old man of the house received the bottle, and then mumbled:

"How prospers Damond's deal, Mat? You know he promised you and I a large sum if he succeeded."

"We have the girl Lena at the still in the woods yonder, and to save her life she has consented to become his wife. Damond concluded not to leave her in Baltimore, where he took her first. A fellow whom he spotted as a former lover of Lena met him there. Damond let the cuss, who was called Seymore, work him, and promised to take him in as a member of the gang, but Damond put the mark of destruction on his boot, and then sent him with me to carry the girl to our still near here in a taxicab. The guy tried to down me, but I had seen the mark on his boot, and I shot him and pitched him out of the cab in the streets of Baltimore." There was some more talk, and then he hurried away, saying: "I must get back to the still at once."

I had solved the mystery of the mysterious mark "XX." It meant that upon what or whom it was placed by the Moonshiners, that thing or person was doomed to destruction. So they must have killed Burt James.

I followed Male.

He led me to a dark log structure in the depths of the forest—evidently the secret still.

I had resolved at all hazards to rescue Lena Lovell from the red-handed wretches who held her a captive, and I crept to the house.

The two windows were closed by blinds, but I noiselessly opened one of them and peered in.

All was darkness inside.

Presently I heard some one moving about, and dropped down out of sight.

An instant later the face of a beautiful girl appeared at the window.

"Are you Lena Lovell?" I asked softly.

"Yes," she replied.

"I am a friend, and would help you. Climb through the window, and I will conduct you to a place of safety," I whispered.

I assisted her from the window, and we hurried away undetected.

There was a toll-gate a little distance down the highway in the direction of the city, where dwelt an honest old man whom I knew well.

Thither I conducted Lena, and left her in the care of the old fellow and his wife.

Then I set out across the wooded field for the mad-house but had not gone far when suddenly Mat Male leaped upon me, with a knotted club in his hand, and aimed a terrific blow at my head.

The attack was so sudden that I was knocked down and rendered almost senseless, but as Male was rushing forward to complete his murderous work, a terrible shriek rang out, and Mad Madge burst out of the thicket at my side, and, looking like a spirit clothed in white, she sprang be-

tween me and my would-be assassin. One hand was uplifted menacingly.

Male recoiled.

My eyes had closed for a moment as the terrible dizziness caused by the blow came upon me, but drawing my arm across my brow I sprang to my feet.

At the same moment Madge snatched a pistol from the side-pocket of my coat, from which it protruded, and discharged it at Male.

With a groan he fell.

Madge fled in the direction of the secret still of the Moonshiners, paying no heed to me.

I made my way to a farmer's house, hired a horse, and rode to Baltimore.

A little after daylight, with a large force of

revenue officers, I returned to the secret still, but the building was in ashes, and in the cellar we found the bones of four men, one of them, as known by a watch found on him, engraved with the name of Damond.

At the gate-house I found Madge Lovell and her sister Lena. Madge said grimly:

"I have kept my oath. I made my way to the secret still and entered it. All the men, including Damond, were in the cellar, which could be entered only by a trap-door. The door was heavy, I then closed the trap, secured it with a couple of iron bolts, and then fired the building."

The Lovell girls were sent home.

Madge escaped prosecution as it was proven that she was not sane.

## COUNTING UNCLE SAM'S HARD CASH

WHILE business men throughout the United States resort to the daily ledger sheet to determine their balance on hand, Uncle Sam is weighing his money to see how many thousand dollars he has varied in estimating the wealth in the coffers of the Federal Treasury. With Treasurer John Burke leaving office within the next ten days, every cent that belongs to the United States must be counted and turned over by him to his successor.

The Treasury is about the busiest spot in the national capital to-day. Thousands of clerks are going over the details of the country's biggest fiscal year to put things in shipshape for the next man who will affix his signature to our greenbacks as Treasurer of the United States.

Eighteen pounds of gold on a scale represents \$5,000 in coin of the realm. As attaches of the building were leaving the vaults recently in a truck loaded with gold, two bags, containing \$5,000 each, dropped to the ground. The wheels of the heavy truck passed over the bags, bursting the covering and scattering a golden shower all around the vehicle. Immediately a dozen special officers on duty at the Treasury were around the truck. The gold pieces were gathered up and counted by two men before being put in new bags and replaced in the truck.

Millions of dollars were being sent to the official counting room, where Uncle Sam goes over his monetary resources under the heaviest possible protection. On January 5 there were on hand in the Treasury gold coin and bullion amounting to more than \$2,000,000,000. The silver amounted to \$171,000,000. In the general fund there were coins of silver and gold whose value exceeded \$700,000,000.

A committee, composed of C. N. McCrootty, chairman; John Moon, who represents the Treasurer; John Burke and F. E. Rappert, who represent the Secretary of the Treasury, is supervising the details of the greatest money count that has ever been made in the United States, it was declared by officials.

In weighing his money Uncle Sam places a bag of gold coin weighing eighteen pounds on a delicate and extremely accurate pair of scales. In this bag is gold valued at \$5,000, and it is afterward used to balance the scales when the other bags of gold are weighed. If the slightest variation arises the scales are examined and the money in the particular bag counted over again. This is done by two men, who are under protection of an armed guard.

In the silver bags the weight is greater, but not so the money value. For each \$1,000 represented by a bag of silver the scales are pulled up to the fifty-six pound mark. This makes the accounting a laborious task and a score of men are employed to handle the money.

Within a few days the count of money will be finished and John Burke will receive a receipt from the committee appointed to count the funds on hand. This will guarantee to his successor that there is no shortage when he takes office.

The Bureau of Printing and Engraving is responsible for the accuracy of newly printed currency, hence the committee need but count the stacks of money that come up to the Treasury every day from the paper money mint along the Potomac. This work will be greatly simplified, as the clerks will merely check in the bundles as they arrive and not bother about counting the individual pieces of currency.

With the gold and silver, however, it is different, as great care must be taken that the bags weigh to the ounce the figure required. Money loses its weight in its travel all through the country. A silver dollar loses considerable weight during the course of its travels. The worn coins are gathered up by the Treasury officials at regular intervals and melted.

Typical of a recent day's business it may be stated that in the general fund of the Treasury there was \$746,475,206.24. The day's disbursements were \$393,232,267.44. The receipts were the same, however, so the daily balance was not disturbed.—N. Y. Herald.

# The Human Boomerang

By JOHN P. ROBINSON

OUTSIDE the wintry night was bleak, nasty and wet. Safe in the portals of the Comfort Cafe, what cared he how it blew? My purse was fairly well filled, my clothing good, my warm ulster hung from the hat tree ready to don, whenever I wished to brave the storm as far as the nearest taxicab.

No, I cared naught for the weather. Within forty rods were the big steamers, sounding their bugles ready for a night trip eastward; and the Atlantic Ocean is no safer in a blow than a church in a thunderstorm. Hundreds might be venturing a trip "down east" this blizzard night, but I cared not a jot, I was bored with my own company.

I had dallied over a third cup of coffee, when the door of the cafe opened, and a strange, shaggy, nondescript sort of an individual looked furtively in. Seeing so few in the restaurant, he got bolder and sat down.

"Nasty night," he said briefly, as I shoved a chair toward him.

The waiter came forward, and he ordered a chopped ham sandwich and a cup of coffee.

"Sure," I answered; "such a night as one wants to fortify the inner man with a substantial meal," I added pointedly.

Reading my thought, he answered: "Yes, but my cash capital is but fifteen cents. I must be modest."

"Your means may be limited," I answered, "but mine are not. Call back the waiter and have a good dinner. I shall tell him to make it all one check, which I shall pay." I shoved him the menu card.

"Roast chicken? Could you stand the price?"

"Sure thing. A double order if you like. Plenty of fixings and hot coffee, something for dessert on the side."

"The vibration is already changing," he muttered as if to himself, yet his words did not escape me. Shaggy of beard though he was, his was the face of the ascetic and scholar; the book-worm, the kind one meets in the book stalls of Boston, poring over volume after volume, as if they needed an intellectual tid-bit—those who live more in the mental than material world.

"You are a student of psychology?" I asked.

He nodded. "The magic of the subliminal mind is wonderful," he answered. "All day I have walked, walked without eating, saving my last fifteen cents for this evening meal; yet also conjuring up visions of a good feed. You are an answer to my demand. Demanding of the universal supply. Congratulate yourself, sir, that you are the victim."

"A willing one," I laughed. "My pleasure shall be to see you eat."

The waiter had brought his order of roast

chicken with plenty of side dishes, and he began to eat. Not ravenously, but as if he had all the time there is, and he talked easily between bites. Whoever he was, he manifested gentle manners and breeding. He was no glutton.

"You've been reading a lot of New Thought, or some Will Power book," I bantered. "But my interference is not an answer to your demand—merely a coincidence."

"No; I exhausted mental science books some time ago; my last venture was on the topic of Esoteric Psychology.

"Aha! The higher science that commands even the mental processes."

"Exactly! And I discovered that the universe is governed by the law of vibration. Everything is vibration."

"I have read such statements, and I can well believe that an empty stomach sets up vibrations so insistent as to make a man believe almost anything, once a supply comes. But I can't believe that a good dinner is always the correlative and necessary complement of those vibrations. I mean if one hasn't the price, the dinner is an uncertainty."

"But you saw me demonstrate it?"

"Coincidence," I reiterated.

Leisurely he picked up the ham bone of the chicken and polished it down to the drumstick ere he answered:

"You have proven yourself a friend in my distress. Would you accompany me to my humble lodging and listen to a theory of mine? But possibly you have engagements?"

"Delighted; when you have finished your meal."

We topped off with an ice-cream and more coffee of delicious, fragrant aroma. Then we braved the wind and storm and thrashing elements. He would not let me call a cab, saying his room was near by. But we walked fully a mile, and in a crowded section he stopped at a door and led me up two flights to his room, lighted a kerosene lamp and gave me a chair. He crushed up an old soap box and lighted a meagre fire in the small fireplace, and this gave out enough caloric to ward off the wintry vibrations. I produced some good cigars and waited for him to open the argument, determined at last to good-naturedly blow all his arguments to smithereens with my superior logic.

"Do you know," he led off, "that there is but one oversoul? that all people are fundamentally alike? that there is but One Mind?"

I nodded. "Read so, but I can't grasp the idea wholly; go ahead."

"I am you; you are me. At present you may have a little money, while I have none. Yet I venture to state that at some time in your experience you have been as devilishly destitute as I."

am, else you could not have recognized my need. You have contracted that phase of the Universal Mind; in me you saw that expression of the Universal Self you have yourself experienced; somewhere, somehow somebody helped you. So you in turn assisted me in the most nonchalant manner possible—all due to experience. Again, I ranted of psychology; you understood. You, too, are a student?"

"Only slightly. Simply do a little research work in the line of my profession. I'm a magazine writer, you know, a free-lance. Of course I've seen bad times, when the next meal was a game of guess. But to-night I'm comparatively flush. Sold a rousing detective story to a publisher yesterday for nearly three hundred dollars, and I wasn't broke either."

"Three hundred dollars," he gasped. His queer eyes glittered, but not with avarice, a peculiar longing look instead. "If I had but one I could go."

"Go where?"

"South somewhere. Much study has left me weak physically." He did not refer to lack of food. "This New England climate will get me soon if I am not able to leave it, but I can't find the change, in my subliminal mind, I mean."

"Have you demanded it?" I asked.

He flushed. "Many times, yet it does not seem to manifest in my external world. How is it? The law often works in the most trivial ways, in minor needs, as my meeting with you to-night, while a bold demand, like a trip to the tropics, will not come true. Perhaps I do not control my fear and doubt."

"I do not easily follow you."

"Fear and doubt are fatal. A consensus of opinions of the leading psychologists agrees that the universe contains all that there is; man cannot imagine what does not exist, hence what he imagines is really existent. That imagination and desire are the forces which connect us with what we want, both attributes of the conscious or objective mind, this acting in turn on the subliminal or subconscious mind, which in its turn is connected with the one universal mind; and so desire and imagination set at work forces which bring to pass the desired condition or thing. Balzac treats of this subject in his book, "The Magic Skin," written half a century or more ago, yet in agreement with the conclusions of more recent philosophers."

So he ranted for a full half hour. I followed parts of his argument, others were as Greek and Sanscrit to me. Yet one point stood out clear and impressed me deeply:

"Everything," he claimed, "moves in a circle, ultimately returning to its source. An evil action or good one returns to the actor, the law of action and reaction being supreme."

As he warmed to his favorite topic he became almost eloquent, inspired. Clearly, he was too deep for me. Some of his abstruse terminology I could not even understand, but his last state-

ment, "Everything returns," that was the clincher. It decided me; I would try the experiment.

My decision was made with mind alert, fully conscious that though the man exercised a peculiar fascination I was no victim of his hypnotic spells. My decision was based on pure, cold calculation. It might be an expensive trial, but I would play the game.

"Want to go South, eh?" I went on; "to the Bermudas or Florida?"

"Anywhere," he answered dejectedly, "but the idea is hopeless."

"Do you know," I went on, "that a daily train leaves here at midnight that will take you to Jacksonville in thirty-six hours? that in a few more you can go two, three hundred miles down the east coast amid cocoanut palms, orange groves, stop at any of half a hundred small towns that dot the coast? that the genial Gulf Stream flowing close to shore tempers that climate so as to make winter almost like summer? or you can go off to the west coast, Tampa, Sarastota?"

"Ever been in Florida?"

"Pretty much all over it."

"Then why do you stay here?"

"Got saturated with the South; wouldn't leave old Boston this winter if I was paid for it. But I'm going to send you. Can you take that train to-night?"

He trembled with excitement. "Don't joke that way."

"I'm not joking. I can send you for a hundred dollars. Pack your grip and come along. I'll show you I'm not fooling."

It was a pitiful little bundle he packed. He smoldered the fire and blew out the light; whether he owed any room rent or not, I never knew, but he left the room as it was and departed willingly.

I bought him a ticket at the South Station, and stayed by him till the train pulled out; at the last minute I pressed into his hand what was left from an even hundred dollars; that would start him in the land of flowers. I knew the locality well enough to realize there would be no danger of his coming to want.

Again, this time alone, I breasted the storm, which had become more violent. Up Summer street I went, bent to the wind, which blew gusts of snow and sleet in my face. I was not thinking further of the incident, my mind was only on reaching a taxi stand or an open cafe where I could get more coffee, when I slipped on something and fell.

The object felt like wet, slippery lather. I picked it up just for curiosity; it was a leather pocketbook, and I slipped it in my ulster pocket.

In the seclusion of my room, in the early morning hours, I found it contained one hundred and fifty-one dollars.

The "law" of the metaphysical monomanias had worked in his favor and mine, yet we had not even exchanged names.

## Who Did It?

By SAM W. SMALL, JR.

PETER KNIGHT JONES was a good citizen of New York, and his only failing, if failing it can be called, was his fondness for an occasional game of draw. He was not boastful, but when he sometimes made a shrewd poker player lay down an ace high flush with a pair of trays, his neighbors were pretty apt to hear of it.

The Joneses lived in a nice flat in a very desirable neighborhood, and were accounted well-to-do by all the community. Mrs. Jones received her callers, had her teas, and was happy. Jones attended to business downtown, had a little recreation at the club, and was happy. So things journeyed along smoothly until the following conversation occurred at the breakfast table one fine spring morning:

"My dear, have you a hundred dollars in your pocket you could let me have?" said Mrs. Jones sweetly to her husband.

"A hundred dollars! Why, Mary, what on earth can you want with a hundred dollars?" asked the amazed Jones.

"I want to buy something with it."

"Buy something, buy what? Out with it, don't quibble. You know I despise quibbling."

"I want to buy a—a motorcycle," whimpered Mrs. Jones. Jones dropped his knife with such force that it cracked his plate and the set was ruined. (Set consisted of two pieces, both plates, but Sevres—genuine Sevres.)

Jones never uttered a sound, but looked, just looked and wondered. Could this be his modest, respectable wife wanting to make a show of herself on one of those two-wheeled, wind-blown-up instruments, that were only good for spoiling the human shape by giving people curvature of the spine. No wonder he just looked, but Mrs. Jones began again:

"Why, all of our set are going to get motorcycles, and we are going to form a club. There's Susie Glover. You know what you always thought of Sue? Why, she was in only yesterday afternoon and said—"

But why prolong this part of the story? Sufficient to say, Mrs. Jones got her motorcycle.

The next week was as a nightmare to Jones, and it took heroic effort on his part to sum up enough courage to enter his room. The minute the door was opened the fumes of witch-hazel, arnica and chloroform liniment almost took his breath away, and made sleep seem dangerous to a person with a weak heart. (Jones was always sure, doctors to the contrary notwithstanding, that he had a weak heart; in fact, he used to feel a sinking sensation when a bill collector called.)

He would sneak quietly in and glance at the bed, where the figure of his wife showed lumpy

and frightfully disfigured through the thin covering. A pitiful little moan, made all the more pitiful by an effort to suppress it, would occasionally escape her. Jones would listen attentively a few moments to make sure she slept, and then removing his clothes, hop lightly in, to be greeted by an "Ouch!" that reminded him there were such things as bruises connected with motorcycle riding. He would then try to be careful, but when, in dreams, he would reach out to seize a pot of gold he was awakened by an awful scream, and besides losing the pot, he would have to get up and rearrange a bandage he had almost torn off his suffering spouse.

This state of affairs finally came to an end to the infinite relief of Jones. The next thing he heard of motorcycle riding came in his mail in the shape of a neat little form requesting Mr. P. K. Jones to kindly remit a check for twenty-five dollars' initiation fee for Mrs. Mary Wallace Jones into the "Ladies' League Motorcycle Club." Jones kicked a little, but had to confess he knew about the club before he purchased the motor, and he gave in as gracefully as possible.

There was another shock when he discovered some two-legged, baggy things hanging across a bedroom chair, but of course he couldn't object to them when they were only for use at the club where there was nobody to see them but girls.

When the next notification from the club for five dollars monthly dues arrived, it was worded the "Ladies' League Social and Motorcycle Club." Jones noticed the change, but said not a word. "Having crossed the Rubicon, etc., etc."

Jones was a mild-mannered man and did not believe in harsh dealings, especially with the gentler sex, so he bided his time with a firm determination to take action when it became necessary to stop his wife's mannish doings. The smell of cigarette smoke around the house worried Jones, and for the life of him he could not tell why his whisky and home brew disappeared so much faster than usual. Returning home rather late one night, he found his wife, with bloomers on, sitting in the library quietly reading the afternoon papers. He asked no question, but was volunteered the information "that they were so comfortable around the house."

Jones was puzzled as to the best manner of putting a stop to these outrageous proceedings and could think of no way that did not seem harsh and likely to cause a scene. He could not tolerate a scene. A question from his wife, like a light from heaven, at last decided the problem for him. They were returning from a roof-garden one night where some deep question she was pondering had apparently abstracted his

wife's mind from the performance, and, not being able to keep the matter to herself any longer, she blurted out:

"Tell me, Peter, does it take a queen to make a flush?"

Jones restrained his laughter and explained a flush as five cards of the same suit, and a straight flush as a sequence of five cards of the same suit.

"Well, a flush beats anything except a pair of aces, don't it?"

Jones answered this and several other questions of a like character, but coupling them in his mind with some other late events he then and there laid a deep plot. Several times in the near past she had made requests that were almost demands for five or ten dollars at a time, and when asked why she wanted money would answer either "Just because," or "because she had to have it." Jones was now convinced that she was playing poker, so he determined to play with her, win all her money and thus heap coals of fire on her head. It would be the very thing and he was glad a way had opened to stop her before she became confirmed in these habits.

The opportunity arrived earlier than he had hoped for. The very next night as he alighted from a taxicab after a little seance at the club, by which he was a bit winner, he was startled by another machine stopping just as his drove away. From this one his wife alighted airily, tossed the chauffeur his fare in true thoroughbred fashion, and, mounting the steps, exclaimed:

"I am so glad you are here, Peter; so much trouble to work a night-latch key, you know. Hurry, old boy, and open her up."

Jones opened the door and, when they were safely inside, meekly asked:

"What kept you out so late, Mary?"

"Oh, we had a little game down at the club, and it lasted longer than usual."

Jones's face lighted up instantly, and he eagerly inquired:

"How'd you come out, Mary?"

"I won fifty or sixty," she answered.

"Would you like to play me a game? I sometimes play, you know," Jones sinistinely remarked.

"I don't mind if I do. Where are the cards and chips?"

Jones led the way to the library, produced the essentials from an escritoire, and asked what the game should be. All jack-pots and a fifty-dollar freeze-out suited Mary. She said they played "bet what you like" at the club and that suited Jones, who was thinking of bluffs. So they cut for deal and sat down to what was in technical terms "Two dollar and a half jack-pots, table stakes and a fifty-dollar freeze-out," making, as Jones thought, a pretty stiff game; but Mary didn't seem to mind in the least.

The cards were dealt; Mary opened and won the first pot without a struggle on a pair of aces. She won the next two, and Jones then won his first pot after a couple of pretty stiff bets, which convinced him Mary knew more about the game than he had given her credit for. It was then Mary's deal, and when Jones picked up his hand and found an ace full on ten spots, he smiled softly to himself and opened her for ten dollars. Mary stayed. Jones stood pat, and Mary drew three cards.

"I'll bet you ten," said Jones, with an air of confidence.

"I'll raise you ten," said Mary sweetly, as she pushed two stacks of blues in the pot.

This staggered Jones for an instant, but he came back with a "Ten better than you."

"I'll tap you," she said meekly, and as Jones pushed his last chip in the pot he sung out:

"An ace full!"

"Four queens," said Mary as she laid down her hand and reaching over to the box picked up the money and stuffed it in her bloomers pocket.

"Hold on," shouted Jones, "one of them is a king!"

"Oh, no," responded Mary, "that looks like a king, but it is the 'new woman.' You know she sometimes dresses like a man."

"But that don't go—"

"That's the way we play at the club, and it does go," answered Mary as she softly closed the door behind her.

Jones picked up the king and sadly examined him. The whiskers and mustaches had been deftly removed from his face.

Who did it?

## SWALLOWED OBJECTS AND PARASITES

STOCKBRIDGE reports the case of a child in Bath, Me., who swallowed dress-hook eyes; later these were found, and "each eye was completely threaded by a worm (*A. lumbricoides*?), 5 to 7 or more inches in length. Some had caught three; and in others the worm had succeeded in passing through two of the rings."

The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal reports somewhat similar cases from the museum of the Albany Medical College: "There are two or three large lumbrici (*A. lumbricoides*), once

or twice piercing the holes of a common black metallic suspender button; another specimen, in which the worm is caught in two places of a plated-wire eye . . . and a third, with a firm thread apparently fastened securely around near the middle of its body. These came from the intestinal canal of different children." These illustrate the singular tendency of this worm to crawl through perforations in the intestine, into the duct of the gall bladder, or into the appendix ceci.

## Current News

### WHITE WINGS RETURNS PURSE

As a reward for his honesty in returning a pocketbook containing \$135 and other valuables, Pietro Mantello, a street sweeper, living at No. 124 Gold street, Brooklyn, received a reward of \$20 from the owner of the pocketbook and praise from Street Cleaning Commissioner Leo recently. Mantello is married and has four children.

### FAKE CONCERT NETS \$2,000

A blond young man who said he represented Pryor's Band, and who worked for a concert so enthusiastically that \$2,000 worth of tickets for the Palace Theater, White Plains, N. Y., the other Saturday night, were sold, is being sought by the musically inclined of the Westchester suburb.

The young man departed with the \$2,000, and there was no concert, for the reason, it has since been learned, that the young man had no real connection with the Pryor Institution. The owners of the theatre explained that they have nothing to do with the performances there, merely renting the playhouse.

### CARRIED AN ARSENAL

Hilary Smith, of Brooklyn, was sent to jail the other day for six months and fined \$25 on charges of carrying concealed weapons, drunkenness and disorderly conduct. Smith, who said he was a longshoreman, carried three big revolvers, three razors, two dirk knives, 200 rounds of ammunition, a marked deck of cards, a pair of loaded dice and two half pints of whisky. He was arrested at the Union Station, Washington, D. C., by detectives, who noticed the bulges in his clothing.

"I was getting along all right in New York and Brooklyn," he said in court, "until those cops up there got too inquisitive and I had to leave. Just the same I am a harmless man."

### BAKER'S HUNCH SAVES HIM \$2,000, LESS \$4.26

Charles H. Casterlin, a wholesale baker, of 70 South Eighth street, Newark, N. J., had a premonition that safe burglars were going to call. He has two safes in his office and was trying to decide in which he would place \$2,000 or whether it would be better to take the money around to the police station, when his brother appeared. They jointly decided it would be better to deposit the money in the safe that usually held the ledgers, and this was done.

When Mr. Casterlin opened his shop the other morning he discovered his premonition had come true. The safe robbers had been there and had ripped the door from the safe in which he usually kept the money. All their tools lay in front of

the second safe at which they apparently had been working when frightened away.

The robbers got \$4.26, which was in the cash register.

### MUSICAL PITCHFORKS

A tale comes out of England which illustrates admirably the sort of unexpected demand which may have to be met in building up a foreign trade. A British manufacturer of edge tools made up his mind to secure a share of the trade in Kaffir picks, and obtained a sample of the native-made pick, which he reproduced so exactly that it seemed to be impossible to detect the difference between it and the native article. His tools, however, did not sell, and a representative was sent out to investigate. He found there was one thing for which the Kaffir used the pick that had not been taken into consideration. The native took it out of its haft and used it as a cattle call, and every Kaffir had found that the British-made pick had not quite the right note. It speaks well for the enterprise of the maker that, having discovered this, he produced a Kaffir pick with the right note and established a trade which, the story goes, he has retained ever since.

### 1,000-YEAR-OLD TREE

Somma Lombardo, a small place about thirty miles from Milan, Italy, boasts the oldest tree in Italy, perhaps the oldest in old Europe. It is a cypress, and tree experts say its age is over 1,000 years. History has mentioned it more than once, probably because it grows near a spot where history has been rather busy.

King Francis I of France, running before his foes after the battle of Pavia, in the fifteenth century, hacked part of its trunk with his sword—probably in irritation at his bad luck.

The tree is now a giant. Cypressess are tall, rather rigid, very straight and give a peculiar sad nobility to those parts of Italian landscape where they flourish. But this one is taller than its brothers, cousins or uncles. It is 81 yards high, of 18 feet girth, and its deep green branches widen out toward the top to a circumference of 63 feet.

Napoleon, who respected few things when they came in his way, found this venerable tree in his path when planning the splendid road from Milan to the Simplon Pass. But he gave orders, that the road should go out of its straight course here to save the cypress.

Fifty years ago a thunderbolt struck it, but burned only part of its sombre crest. It is the property of the city of Somma Lombardo and it has been inclosed.

## A STRANGE TREE

A species of acacia which grows very abundantly in Nubia and the Soudan is also called the "whistling tree" by the natives. Its shoots are frequently distorted in shape by the agency of larvae of insects and swollen into a globular bladder from one to two inches in diameter. After the insect has emerged from a circular hole in the side of the swelling, the opening played upon by the wind becomes a musical instrument nearly equal in sound to a sweet-toned flute. The whistling tree is also found in the West Indian islands. In Barbadoes there is a valley filled with these trees, and when the trade winds blow across the island, a constant, moaning, deep-toned whistle is heard from them, which in the still hours of the night has a very weird and unpleasant effect.

## SKELETON OF PREHISTORIC OX IS FOUND IN LONDON

The skeletons of a prehistoric elephant and a prehistoric ox have just been found at a depth of forty-five feet below the soil of London, when excavations were made for a building in Regent street. The bones date back to the days when the world was young, and mammoths, giant elephants and hippopotami lived in the great semiprimitive marshes of what is now England.

The finding of such traces of former ages is not a novelty in this geologically old country. A few years ago a lump of ivory weighing sixteen pounds was dug up at Chelsea, and was found on investigation to be a mammoth's tooth. The skull of an enormous rhinoceros was dug up in Fleet street recently. In 1901 a lead coffin, containing the bones of a human being, believed to have lived 4,000 years ago, was unearthed in north London.

## A MIRACLE OF OLD PERU

Long ago, when Peru was a jewel in the Spanish crown, there lived in that country a negro of such remarkable sanctity that his miracles rivaled those of the best white saints of his time. Fearing for the supremacy of his race, the Spanish bishop took the precaution of forbidding this dark-skinned saint to give any further exhibitions of his power, an order which was accepted with the humility that marks the real saint of every age, land or color. Now the Spaniards built a cathedral in Lima, and during the building of it a workman fell from the topmost scaffolding before the horrified eyes of the holy negro. It was a fearful dilemma. A second's delay and the man would be dashed to pieces. "Stop!" he shouted; and leaving the workman hanging in midair he sought out the bishop and explained the situation. If the bishop did not want a poor son of Ham to perform miracles, would he prefer to come and do the job himself? The bishop wisely chose to allow his black sheep to return to the cathedral and "carry on"; the workman fell up again gently to his scaffolding, and the work of building went happily on.

## HIS IMPERSONATOR

Maxim Gorky, the playwright and radical writer, had an unusual experience when traveling in America during his exile from Russia, according to a story going the rounds of London. Among the towns he visited was Georgetown, S. C., where he found one of his own plays, "The Lower Depths," billed, together with an announcement that "at the end of the performance the author will appear in person to salute and thank the audience."

Gorky naturally went to enjoy this treat, and found that when the curtain fell after the last act of his play a man made up to resemble him came before the footlights and told the audience in broken English how flattered he felt at the reception accorded his drama. Going around to the stage door, Gorky tackled his impersonator, who confessed that he had perpetrated the same fraud in many small towns.

"I have also," he added, "passed myself off as Rostand, Sudermann and Maurice Donnay. It pleases the public and does the real authors no harm."

Gorky was so amused at the man's cheek that he promised not to expose him, and refrained from disclosing his identity during the remainder of his brief stay in Georgetown.

## DEAD SPIRITUALIST SILENT

Though more than forty hours have elapsed since the body of Thomas L. Bradford, psychic investigator and lecturer, was found in the gas-filled room of the house where he had lived in Detroit, no message has come back from the spirit world to Mrs. Ruth Doran.

Mrs. Doran was brought into communication with Bradford through his advertisements in Detroit newspapers for "some one interested in spiritualistic science." She, however, denies that an agreement existed between them contemplating his suicide to put to a test the theory as to whether the dead may communicate with the living.

The Detroit police base their belief that such was Bradford's purpose from a sheet found in his typewriter on which he had written: "And it is through scientific facts that I propose to demonstrate clearly the phenomena of spirits and prove that all the phenomena is outside the domain of super-natural."

Though conceding that the message indicates Bradford died with the belief he could transmit a message from the spirit world, Mrs. Doran denies emphatically that any demonstration of that nature had been planned between them.

"I am his friend," she said. "If he can cause his spirit to come back to earth I believe his spirit will come to me first. I believed in him in life, and I will wait and see if there is any spirit manifestation. If there is such a thing as spirit communication, I believe he will make his presence known to me."

### SPIRIT OF DAUGHTER APPEARS TO HIM

As the result of a vision seen by a father at his daughter's grave, Charles Edwin King, Jr., is under arrest, charged with killing his fiancée, Arline May Stout, at her home in West Philadelphia on October 10.

Freeman M. Stout, a Government mechanical engineer, says that his daughter appeared to him in a vision when he visited her grave and said: "Father, go to see Edwin. He can tell you all."

"She told me she had gone to Edwin several times and tried to induce him to tell the truth," said the father. "Only a few days before her death Arline told me she was afraid of Edwin. She said he had made several threats to kill himself if she did not marry him at once."

This led Stout to swear out a warrant for the young man's arrest. King, who is twenty-one years old, was arrested at Bristol, Pa., and brought to Philadelphia for a hearing. He was held in \$3,000 bail for an inquest. Bond was furnished by his lawyer.

Miss Stout, a seventeen-year-old high school girl, was found dead on a couch in her night dress when her parents and sister returned home late at night. An army pistol belonging to her father was beside her with one cartridge discharged.

King said he had visited the girl during the afternoon and departed early. He declared himself innocent. He was not arrested at the time, as the police believed Miss Stout had either committed suicide or shot herself accidentally.

### BODY EXHUMED FOURTH TIME

By order of the Dane County Board of Supervisors of Madison, Wis., the body of Richard ("Diamond Dick") Lawrence, former Denver politician, was exhumed for the fourth time on February 7, in a final effort to clear up the mystery of his death and the disappearance of the \$300,000 in jewels and other valuables, including the \$100,000 Orange Diamond.

The widow charges that her husband was murdered, his wealth stolen and the body of a laborer was killed by a train, identified and buried as that of her husband.

The mangled body was identified by his nephew, an undertaker, notwithstanding the fact that a workman's dinner pail was found beside the body. When, however, the charge of murder was made, the grave was opened. The body of Lawrence was found, not mangled, but with a wound on the skull, according to the widow. Exhumed a third time, investigators say, Lawrence's body had been mutilated to make it appear that it had been mangled by the train.

Dr. C. H. Bunting, was given charge of the body after it was exhumed to determine whether Lawrence met his death by a blow on the head or by being struck by a train.

Mrs. Lawrence charges that shortly after the death of Lawrence on March 21, 1918, certain of

his former friends and acquaintances showed evidence of wealth. It was known that Lawrence habitually carried bills of large denominations with him. The widow alleges that shortly after her husband's death several large banknotes were put into circulation and that they all were stained. An analysis of one of these stains, she said, showed that it was blood.

Queen Victoria is said to have rejected the Orange Diamond as a coronation gift. Lawrence is said to have obtained possession of it while a politician in Denver. He is alleged to have been given fortunes in "hush money" by the railroads.

### PRESSURE OF 145,000 POUNDS PER INCH PROVES DIAMONDS LEAST IMPRESSIBLE SUBSTANCE

After subjecting over \$15,000 worth of diamonds to hydraulic pressures up to 145,000 pounds per square inch, Dr. I. B. Adams of the Geophysical Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution has for the first time determined that the diamond, now known as the hardest thing on earth, is also the least compressible substance known.

"If a diamond were buried 100 miles below the surface of the earth, the pressure due to the super-incumbent rock would decrease the volume only about three-quarters of 1 per cent.," Dr. Adams said.

The great pressure used in the experiment was applied by means of a powerful hydraulic press that forced a piston into a heavy steel-walled bomb containing the diamonds surrounded by kerosene. A delicate coil of "therlo" wire, whose electrical resistance changes with pressure, was used to measure the exact pressures applied. For comparison, duplicate experiments were made on steel of known compressibility.

"Contrary to what is commonly believed, no apprehension need be felt in subjecting diamonds or other homogeneous substances to the enormous pressures just so long as the pressure is strictly hydraulic or uniform in all directions," said Dr. Adams in explaining that the diamonds went through the experiment unharmed.

The work on the compressibility of the diamond was done as a part of the laboratory task of determining the various chemical and physical consistencies of the substance that make up this earth. This elemental data of pure science is needed, so that the general laws governing nature can be found and applied to perfect some practical technical methods and materials.

It has been found that the low compressibility of the diamond is intimately related to its high melting point, its low expansion, co-efficient and its high atomic frequency. The nearest competitor to the diamond, Tungsten, is nearly twice as compressible, steel is nearly four times as compressible and graphite, the other modification of carbon, of which the diamond is composed, is nineteen times as compressible.

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How to open a safe without knowing the combination or wrecking the strong box was next demonstrated.

## SURPLUS OF WOMEN IN AUSTRIA

The Austrian census of population taken Jan. 31, 1920, shows that the number of females has markedly increased, both absolutely and relatively, and in all age groups, says the Journal of the A. M. A. There are 1,087 females for every thousand males in the whole of Austria, but for Vienna alone the figures are 1,163 to 1,000, an increase of seventy-seven males as compared to 1910.

But if we take into consideration only those persons classed as of a marriageable age—all unmarried females or males over nineteen years—we get quite a different aspect.

In Vienna we find 1,413 females to 1,000 males at present, whereas ten years ago it was 1,227 to 1,000. In the rural districts the picture is not so appalling, but even there the ratio is never under 1,100 to 1,000, meaning that fully one-tenth of the females cannot hope to marry. Very striking is the change in the industrial and mining districts of our country. While in 1910 there was in these places a distinct surplus of males, now the females outnumber their mates by from 42 to 117 per thousand.

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### Sold His for \$10.00 and Ordered Another

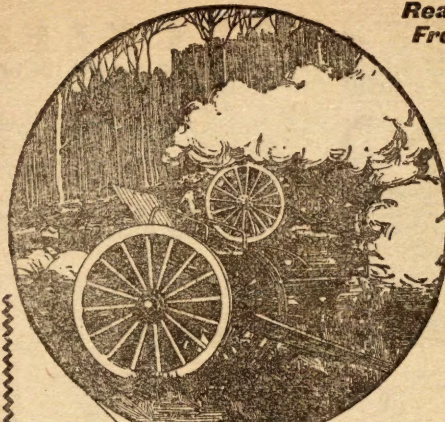
Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for \$10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ebereth, Mandao, N. Dak.

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My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for \$25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Breaky, Jeunesville, Pa. Box 34.

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I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a \$12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greensboro, N. C.



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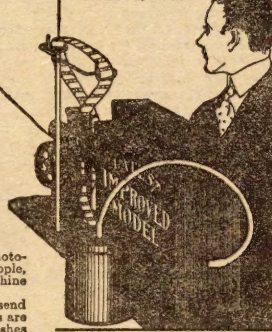
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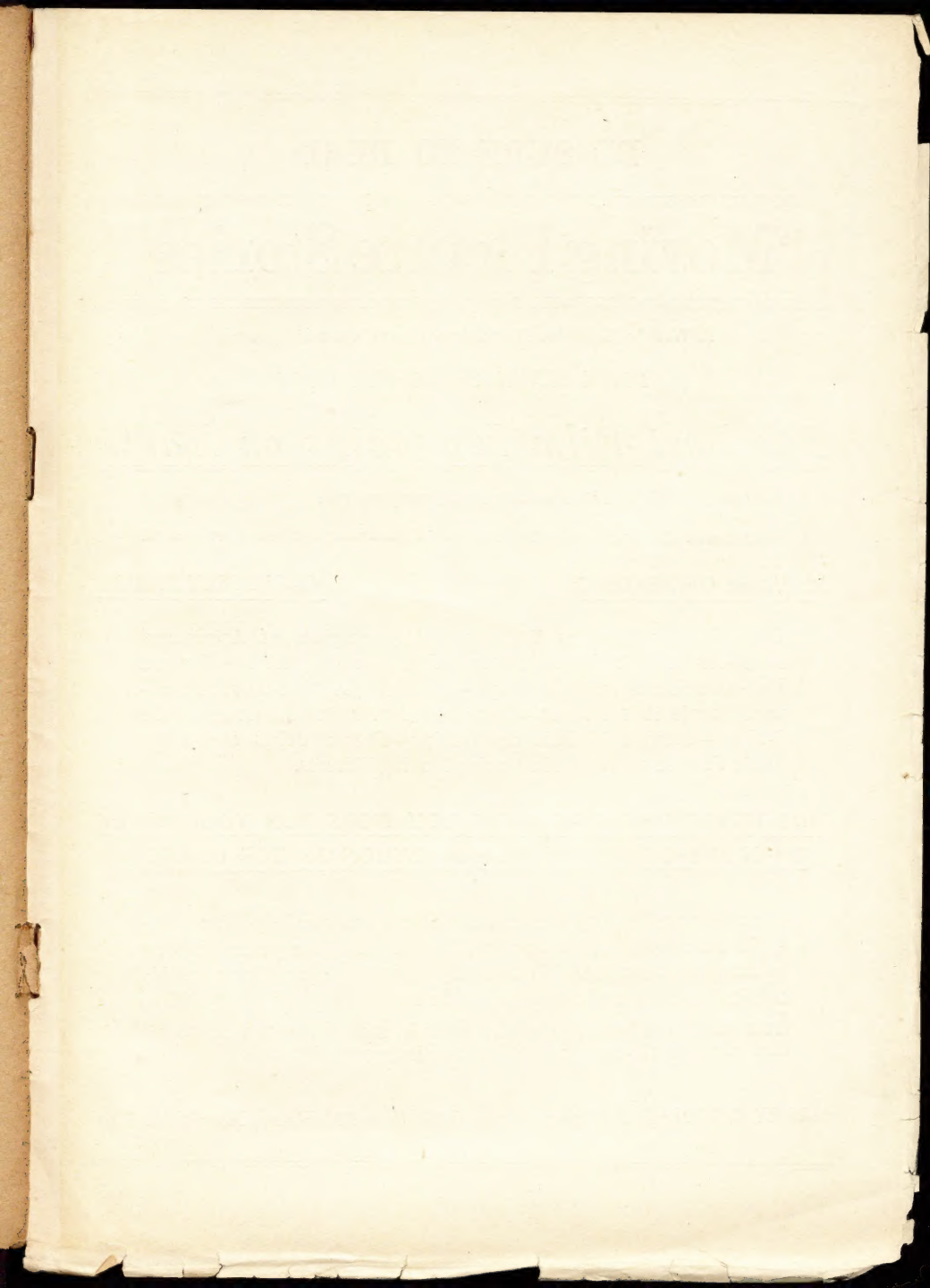
## A GOLD MINE IN A GARAGE

Some time ago while excavating for a large underground gasoline tank at the Grass Valley Garage, Nevada County, California, Mr. A. B. Snyder, the owner, uncovered a well-defined ledge of gold quartz at a depth of six feet. Mr. Snyder decided to do some mining inside of his garage. A windlass was installed and a shaft sunk, and in a short time some beautiful gold specimens were extracted from below the garage floor. The shaft was sunk to a depth of sixty feet.

During the mining operations several tons of gold quartz were taken out of the shaft and drifts under the garage. This was crushed and milled in a nearby stampmill. The quartz gave returns of \$137.50 per ton.

After working the mine for a short time the waste dirt taken out accumulated in a large pile which extended the full length of the floor inside the building, leaving little room for automobiles. Mr. Snyder decided he had mined enough and shut down. A local gold-mining company then purchased the mineral rights under the garage and are now working the ledge through their mine.





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